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PRINCE OF PERSIA AND
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P42

A GMR WORLD EXCLUSIVE

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PlayStation 2



Violence

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2003 JULY | **ISSUE 06**
GMR®

*There is no emotion; there is peace.
There is no ignorance; there is knowledge.
There is no passion; there is serenity.
There is no death; there is only the Force.
Jedi are guardians of peace in the galaxy.
Jedi use their powers to defend and protect,
never to attack others.
Jedi respect all life, in any form.
Jedi serve others rather than ruling over
them, for the good of the galaxy.
Jedi seek to improve themselves through
knowledge and training.*

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 The dark side is stronger than the light
 The dark deserve their fate




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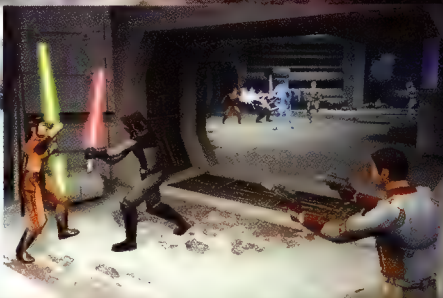
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➔ "***** hell!" was the most common response to seeing the first high-res screens of Konami's next *Metal Gear*. The game looks spookily, frighteningly, and almost unbelievably, good. Snake—if it is Snake (we have our doubts)—is spied trudging around a Vietnam-style jungle, with individual blades of grass providing cover as he prepares to snipe the enemy. The sunlight streaming through the trees (if it is eventually realized in motion the way it looks in these stills) is a shot across the bow of the Xbox for sheer graphical prowess—not so surprising when you consider that the two-year-old *Metal Gear Solid 2* is still arguably the best-looking game on PS2 (after, uh, *Barbarian*, obviously).

Meanwhile the GameCube is turning into a retro-gamer's dream. Hot on the heels of the Capcom *Biohazard* revivals, Kojima has handed off the original PlayStation *Metal Gear Solid* to Silicon Knights, which is bringing it back to life in stunning fashion on Nintendo's (slightly) struggling system. Add to that Kojima's pet GBA vampire project, *Boktai*, and you've got a threesome so solid, it could knock a hole in the wall the size of a cow. Or at least a fully "grown" gamer: Imperilling the entire building, however, this month, is the last-minute arrival of two huge racing games: *Gran Turismo 4* and Namco's equally amazing *Ridge Racer* relative, *R: Racing Evolution*—both of which landed in the GMR office within hours of going to press, and with stunning screens to boot. "I" indeed.

Simon Cox, Editor-in-Chief CODE NAME: ALBINO_CICADA

REPORTING FOR DUTY...

CODE NAME: VOCAL_JAGUARUNDI
JAMES MIELKE
EXECUTIVE EDITOR



Field status: Yelling at someone/thing, somewhere
Spy gadget: Ultradismissive Tantrum Ray installed in his mouth
Profile: Milky uses a substantial portion of his super-powers to protect the free world from irate message board threads and ill-mannered children. Cross his path the wrong way and you'll catch a quick shot to the chops.

CODE NAME: BOOZY_MUDSKIPPER
TOM PRICE
NEWS EDITOR



Field status: Unconscious
Weapon of choice: Newcastle Brown Ale
Profile: Our resident black-ops specialist, Tom's ability to remain in deep cover for superhuman periods of time (usually in Steff's, the local sports bar) would break lesser men and certain small quadrupeds. Tom's extensive training includes a complete folder of Cypress Hill MP3s.

CODE NAME: BAKED_MARMOSSET
DAVID CHEN
MANAGING EDITOR



Field status: Snacking on something yummy
Mutant ability: Unlike most mortal creatures, David doesn't actually need oxygen to survive
Profile: If you don't find David at his desk, that means he's either organizing our asses into oblivion, running amok using his NinjaMajik™ Stealth Cloak, or is holed up in a dusty prison cell in Tijuana.

CODE NAME: TOWERING_BUSHBUCK
ANDREW PFISTER
WRITER



Field status: Getting loquacious with the hobos
Spy skill: To speak without the benefit of vowels, kind of like as if he didn't have lips
Profile: Hired primarily for his ability to communicate through walls, the Fist's low-tech communication skills include speaking with two cups and a string, and spoon-tapping. Guess his time in San Quentin was well spent.

CODE NAME: SENSUAL_TYMOUSE
GERRY SERRANO
ART DIRECTOR



Field status: Currently chewing on his own crunchy carapace
Claim to fame: Does a great Hervé Villechaize impression
Profile: Horrifyingly effective in combat, Gerry's ability to speed-molt on the battlefield at once fascinates and repulses his opponents to death. He can read your memory cards if you let him borrow them for a day.

CODE NAME: .98_CALIBER_CAPUCHIN
CAROLINE KING
DESIGNER



Field status: Preoccupied with Mos Def
Defenses: FemBot force field
Profile: Caroline, when not repelling *GameNow's* Miguel Lopez with her mental brain-lasers, spends most of the day flaunting her army of hot chick friends in front of us, knowing full well that we can look, but not touch. Most of their free time is spent pillow fighting and Jell-O wrestling.

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POST

C'MON GMR READERS. SHOW US SOME OF THAT SWEET SWEET LOVIN'. OR NAUGHTY PICTURES. WE'LL TAKE EITHER. BUT PREFERABLY BOTH.

HEADCHEESE

I have been a subscriber to *GMR* since Issue #1, and I have to say you guys are doing a great job. I just have one question. What type of meat is Andrew Pfister's head made of? I say roast beef, but my friends tell me pork loin. Thanks.

Morphix

Actually, the Fist's head is cobbled together from the dismembered limbs of readers who write letters that he doesn't like. Your letter? He no likey.

"THA KANGS" IN 6

Yo, I love your new magazine. I can't find anything wrong with it. It's not like other gaming magazines, like *Game Pro* or *Electronic Gamer* [sic], that review just three games, with very in-depth reviews that no one has time to read. But with *GMR*, the reviews are short and sweet, and they inform the reader about the game. The only controversy I have with the magazine is that in Issue #4, when reviewing *NBA Street Vol. 2*, you said, and I quote: "Wait for it: Sacramento to cream Los Angeles." Hey, I just happen to be a Lakers fan. I just happen to think that the Lakers might even beat Sacramento. SO BACK OFF PUNKS! Good job on your great new magazine.

Drewble

Only time, and Shaq's voluminous ass, will tell.



TALK TO ME

I am writing you to ask if you can shed some light on an otherwise dimly lit subject. Are there going to be anymore PS2 games that utilize the headset, other than *SOCOM*. I like *SOCOM*, but there has to be more than just this one game, right? What about real-live trash talking during a b-ball game or f-ball game. What about other strategy-based games (e.g., *Ghost Recon*). My question is simply this, is there anything on the horizon that indicates that this is going to happen, or for my gaming fix, should I just look to the Xbox to take care of me? It seems to me that the Xbox has more than just a

leg up in this area. Any feedback on this topic would be greatly appreciated.

A Concerned Gamer

As a matter of fact, all of the next generation of Sega Sports' games (NFL 2K4, NBA 2K4, etc.) will support voice chat in their PS2 versions. Better get those long-distance insults ready. If you need some help, here's a few suggestions:

- Is your grandma playing right now?
- You just got toasted like a strawberry Pop-Tart.
- Do you want me to put my controller down? Will that help?
- I have a message on my foot

addressed to your ass.
• Damn, you suck.

TOONTOWN

On the subject of cel-shading. Cel-shading allows for artistic renditions of 3D graphics. Anybody who complains about cel-shading is a tuna-faced knucklehead. If you speak with people who are artistically inclined (such as, say, art students) most, if not all, will tell you they like cel-shading because it literally makes the game look like an actual cartoon. Now, depending on your viewing preference, this could be good or bad. Anyway, variety is the spice of life.

Keith Hoilett

Tuna-faced knuckleheads are the spice of life too, Keith.

NERD ALERT!

At the risk of sounding like a complete *Star Wars* geek, Princess Leia did NOT give up the location of the "secret rebel base," as you claim in the Wired Issue [GMR #5]. SHE LIED!! Princess Leia (also known as Leia Organa, or Leia Organa Solo) would NEVER give up the location of her friends, even to save the life of her adoptive father (Bail Organa, you might remember him as played by Jimmy Smits in *Attack of the Clones*). For your error, I hereby sentence the entire *GMR* staff (save Caroline, whom I sentence to working as one of Jabba's dancers) to work for all eternity in the spice mines of

WRITE US: GMR@ZIFFDAVIS.COM

Kessel. Mr. Pfister will be quite an asset....

Gregory "Eaglet" Harbin

Your geekness leaves us speechless, and that's saying something.



AS LONG AS YOU'RE SINCERE

Just writing you to let you know that after reading your magazine, considering your views, remarks, and reviews, that I've found your mag is the biggest piece of cow dung I've ever laid my eyes upon. It seems that whatever you KIDS are doing behind the scenes, you don't seem to grasp fully what games are all about. It also seems that all you dung shovelers at GMR can't keep that crap from coming out of your mouths. I tend to think maybe you should concentrate more on [moron] writing reviews that don't have your personal concerns. Oh, by the way, on the back of Issue #4, you have a *Hitman 2* ad. I can see in the future that you all should be on his list for *Hitman 3*. And what the hell is "Fallen Angel's" problem?! By the look of your picture, you seem to be nothing but a big @#\$%ding dork. Hope to not see you guys in the future....Break a leg (or two or however many it takes to stop writing this egotistical magazine)

Sincerely,
Disgruntled Subscriber

You seem to have some unresolved, perhaps mommy-related, rage issues, Disgruntled Subscriber, or should we call you Kay211815@hotmail.com (hint, hint!)? Your vitriol and cutting wit slice us down to the bone, foul and base cur. After reading your letter, Pfister collapsed in a rain of tears, and was only quieted by Gerry slowly rocking him to sleep to the tune of "Unskinny Bop." Make the normally stoic Fist cry? How dare you, dude?

ONE TACO SHORT OF A COMBO PLATE

I've subscribed to this magazine for one reason to get that 10 % card at eb games, and every month i get the magazine it gets stupider and stupider. First off all in every other magazine I see in the sales charts the getaway is first u got that right the sims is number two and its not even on ur chart and *Vice City* is number 8 when in every other magazine its number 3. Maybe u guys should do some research or something beacuse *vice city* is gonna be number 3 or higher for a long time. Plus u guys should stop reviewing stupid rpg games that no one is gonna buy like harpoon 4 or black, just dont waste our time. Two more things on page 14 for arrivals why does it say under Enter the Matrix : lots of hype" then u only give it two flame things if u say that dont u think it would get more then 2 flames. Thats all by the way this magazine is stupid!!

dave from nj

Where did you buy this magazine, Dave? ELECTRONICS BOUTIQUE? And if you look at the Charts page, you'll notice it says "In association with ELECTRONICS BOUTIQUE." Did it ever occur to you that these are the best-selling games at (wait for it...) ELECTRONICS BOUTIQUE? Everything else you said in your letter was dumb, too (as well as misspelled and not capitalized) and won't be dignified with a response. Oh, and one more thing: yo breath stank.

REVIEW?

I love the concept of your magazine, and given time, I'm sure it will be the best multi-platform magazine out there, but upon reading Issue #4, I noticed you responded to a reader's question on page 9 by saying you review only finished games, but on page 38 in your review of *Lara Croft Tomb Raider: AOD*, you say your review is based on an incomplete build, so why should I trust your reviews if you can't even agree on what you are reviewing.

Ryan Green

Um, we haven't reviewed the new Tomb Raider game yet, Ryan. We previewed it in GMR #4. That's why it was in the

Preview section (NEXT) and not in the Review section (NOW) and didn't have a score. We firmly stand by our policy of not reviewing unfinished games and trashing no more than two dumb readers a month.

GEEK LOVE

OK, I have had an ongoing love affair with Ivy from *Soul Calibur* since she first came to life on my Dreamcast in 1999. I still love her to this day. When she made her debut in *SC2* in the arcade in summer '02, I fell even more in love. My No. 1 hot, sexy fighting-game girl chick had become even better!!!

Now that I have her at home again, I am set for life. I'd marry her virtually.

Brigitte Nielsen, a lady actor from the movie *Red Sonja* (which also starred Arnold Schwarzenegger), looks to be my Ivy brought to life! I hope they will cast her as Ivy in the upcoming *Soul Calibur* movie. Since her work in *Red Sonja* involved a sword and fighting, she'd be perfect! Her body really really resembles Ivy in many ways. I know this because I have studied every sector of Ivy's polygon body very, very closely. The great thing about Ivy in *SC1&2*, is that not only is her outfit sexy, her body is just immaculate. Her breasts are perfect in *SC2*, and the way her butt moves in the thong part of

her outfit is just breathtaking. If you go to the character profile and select her fighting phrases and go to the cries of getting hit by an opponent, well, you can get virtual with her as she cries out for you.

I apologize that this e-mail is a bit fanboy fanatic, but I couldn't resist. I have to proclaim my love for Ivy!!!

Scott Whitmore

Wow, and we thought that Star Wars geek guy was sad! Now we've really been left speechless.

CUSTOMER SERVICE

Hey GMR, how does one go about notifying you about a change of address. You don't seem to have a change of address sheet. If you would be so kind, could you tell me who I should contact about my address change, 'cause I sure don't want to lose my great subscription.

Loki

Well Loki, that's easy one. For any and all subscription-related problems, call 1-800-395-7932. For any and all make-up and cosmetics tips, e-mail our art director Gerry Serrano. Who knew that helping people would be so much fun?! ☺



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FRONT

GMR NEWS NETWORK



IN THE NEWS

R: EVOLUTION RACING 019

→ Namco's hot cars and the hot chicks that drive them

TRIBES VENGEANCE 020

→ The popular online shooter is making a comeback

TIME CRISES 020

→ Time Crisis 3 is on the way, as is a surprise

GRAN TURISMO 4 022

→ That's right, we said Gran Turismo 4. First shots inside

GAMECUBE SD CARD ADAPTER 023

→ Get your Gamecube connected

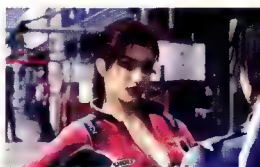
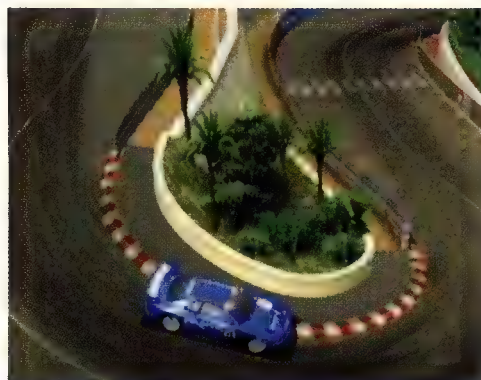
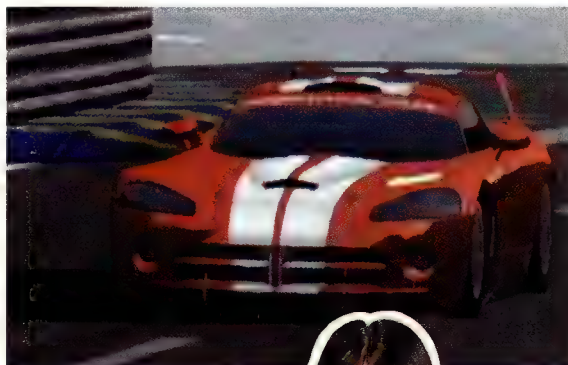
VIVENDI UNIVERSAL 027

→ TV and movies and games, oh my!

INTERNATIONAL REPORT 030

→ Hot teen action!





R: EVOLUTION

NAMCO SAYS "HEY, GT4. EAT ME!"

BREAKING NEWS

While the world goes ape over the new *Gran Turismo 4* shots (how much more realistic can car games actually get anyway?), Namco is quietly preparing to unleash its response, *R: Racing Evolution*, later this fall. Designed by the *Ridge Racer* team, *Racing Evolution* will, unlike the team's previous games, be available on PlayStation 2, GameCube, and Xbox.

Despite the *Ridge Racer* pedigree, *Racing Evolution* won't play with that powerslide-happy style of gameplay. According to Namco, *Racing Evolution* combines "fantastic cinematics and high-performance driving physics with a spectacular story line." Our pals in *Tekken*-land also say that *Evolution* "chronicles the passionate competition

and deep rivalries found only within the professional racing circuit." Exactly how fantastic cinematics and passionate competition will translate to the race course is uncertain, but we've been told that it's somewhere in between *Ridge Racer* and *Gran Turismo*. While that sounds nifty on paper, in our minds we think *Auto Modellista* and start to cry. But since *Ridge* never did us wrong, we'll keep our heads up high and hope for the best. What is known is that the game features 11 tracks (as opposed to the mere less-than-a-handful usually found in *Ridge Racer* games) and eight different racing styles, including GT, rally, and drag.

While the game features your standard Arcade, Time Attack, and

Versus modes, the real meat of the game is found in the Racing Life mode, which is essentially the story mode, featuring hottie rivals Rena and Gina. In-game radio communication between you and your pit crew plays a large role during races, and a reward point system lets you earn power-ups and new abilities, as well as new cars. ▶◀

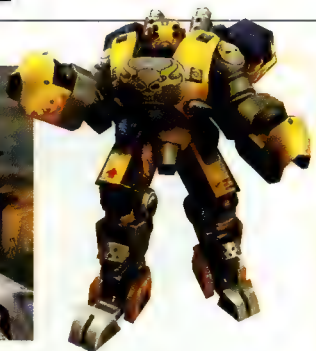
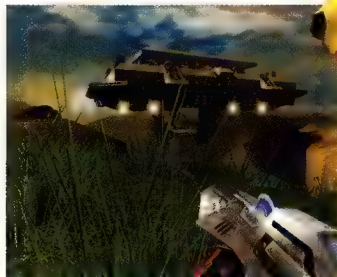
More info at www.namco.com

→ All Namco racing games have a signature racing hottie representing the game. *Ridge Racer Type-4* has the alluring Reiko Nagase, *Ridge Racer V* has the skanky Ai Fukami, and even *MotoGP* has Hitomi Yoshino. *R: Racing Evolution* has Rena. Yes, we did not give you a last name, but it's not as if you actually care. You just care that she's wearing a skin-tight leather pit-crew suit with a bit of her black bra showing.

XB

PS2

GC



TRIBAL WAR

POPULAR ONLINE GAME IS BACK
U.S.A.

The checkered history of one of online gaming's most innovative multiplayer action titles is writing itself a new chapter. *Tribes Vengeance* marks the return of the *Tribes* franchise, and it's a step in a new direction. Not changing is the massive team-based action for which *Tribes* is known. In fact, it's getting brushed up significantly by new developer Irrational Games (maker of *Freedom Force*) and one of the *Tribes* community's leading developers, Michael "KineticPoet" Johnston.

The big change this time around is the inclusion of a full-fledged story-driven single-player campaign—

something absent from the first two *Tribes* games. Plot details are being withheld, but we do know that the game involves playing as multiple characters over a 20-year timeline in a world filled with political intrigue and drama.

Instead of building off the original proprietary engine created by Dynamix, the first game's developer, *Tribes Vengeance* is built on a heavily modified version of the *Unreal* engine. From what we've seen, the action is trademark *Tribes*, yet brand-new at the same time. Our rocket-packs are fully charged. ☛

More info at www.sierra.com

TIME CRISES

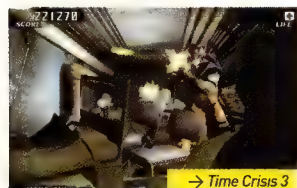
TC3 ENROUTE. AND A SURPRISE...
JAPAN

Here at GMR, we love light-gun games. Anytime an opportunity pops up where we can point something at one of our fellow co-workers and make a dent in his forehead is fine by us.

Well, Namco's heard our pleas for help and is planning to release its current arcade hit, *Time Crisis 3*, on the PS2 later this fall. We think this is great news, because anytime we can dust off that GunCon is a good time had by all.

But the really good news we've sniffed out is that Namco will FINALLY be bringing its System-22 arcade hit, *Crisis Zone*, to PS2 as well. In case you've never played it, it's the best light-gun game ever. You can blow up nearly everything in the game, and we can just imagine how good a PS2 conversion will look on a TV. More details on this one as we draw a bead on them. ☛

More info at www.namco.com



→ Time Crisis 3



→ Crisis Zone

GAMEPORT VITAL GAME INFO, NOW BOARDING...

✈ Arrivals COMING SOON

SYSTEM	ETA	TITLE	HOW HOT?
GC	JUNE	F-ZERO Faster than a hummingbird on Red Bull.	🔥🔥🔥🔥
PS2	JUNE	NAVAL OPS: WARSHIP GUNNER Reminds us of <i>The Philadelphia Experiment</i> , but without Michael Paré.	🔥🔥🔥
XBOX	JUNE	OUTLAW VOLLEYBALL A videogame with bikini-clad chicks playing volleyball? Yeah, right.	🔥🔥
PC	JUNE	WILL ROCK We'll be the judges of that, thank you very much.	🔥🔥
XBOX	JUNE	MIDTOWN MADNESS 3 Good training for our dream job: pizza delivery	🔥🔥
PC	JUNE	STAR TREK: ELITE FORCE II Set phasers to whup-ass.	🔥🔥🔥
PS2	JULY	APE ESCAPE 2 Those monkeys better get back here before they get, er, spanked.	🔥🔥🔥
XBOX	JULY	STAR WARS: KNIGHTS OF THE OLD REPUBLIC 4,000 years before Episode I.	🔥🔥🔥🔥
PC	JULY	STAR WARS GALAXIES Unfortunately, one oft-requested career won't make it: game-magazine editor.	🔥🔥🔥🔥
XBOX	JULY	GHOST RECON: ISLAND THUNDER Apparently, Gilligan is quite deadly with the silenced MP5.	🔥🔥🔥
GC/PS2/XB	AUG	GLADIUS Two hot gladiator chicks in skimpy leather armor enter...	🔥🔥🔥
PC	AUG	TRON 2.0 Little people live inside your computer. No, really.	🔥🔥🔥
PS2	AUG	VIRTUA FIGHTER 4: EVOLUTION At \$20, you won't have to feel bad about buying yet another fighting game.	🔥🔥🔥🔥
GC/PS2/XB	AUG	SOUL CALIBUR II If they ever did a PC version, Sid Meier would be the bonus character.	🔥🔥🔥🔥
PC/PS2/XB	AUG	XIII It's like living inside a comic book, but without the staples in your ass.	🔥🔥🔥
PS2	AUG	CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON Could be good, could be bad, just let us kick someone in the box.	🔥🔥🔥

✈ DEPARTURES OUT NOW

SYSTEM	TITLE	GMR SCORE
PS2/XB	MIDNIGHT CLUB II Faster and more furious than you can imagine.	8 ^{/10}
PS2/XB/GC	BURNOUT 2: POINT OF IMPACT Worth it for the Crash mode alone.	8 ^{/10}
GC	LOST KINGDOMS II One has to ask, did it really need to be found?	5 ^{/10}
PS2	CLOCK TOWER 3 15-year-old Japanese schoolgirls scare us more than monsters do.	6 ^{/10}
PC	BLACK HAWK DOWN Why play the game when you can watch it on CNN?	7 ^{/10}
XB/PC	MOTO GP2 All the fun of riding a crotch-rocket without the potential body cast.	9 ^{/10}
XB	INSIDE PITCH 2003 Seven baseball games is definitely enough for this year.	5 ^{/10}
PS2	MAGIC PENGEL: THE QUEST FOR COLOR We hate being reminded that we can't draw worth a damn.	6 ^{/10}
PC	IL2 STURMOVIK: FORGOTTEN BATTLES We can't spell it, but it sure looks purdy.	9 ^{/10}
PC	MASTERS OF ORION 3 MOO3 fans, send all hate mail to GMR@getover.it.com	1 ^{/10}
GC	MEGA MAN NETWORK TRANSMISSION Piister got so pfrustrated, he put his pfist through the pfloor.	6 ^{/10}
PS2	.HACK//MUTATION Setting a new speed record for releasing a sequel.	8 ^{/10}
GC	CONFLICT: DESERT STORM The Operation Iraqi Freedom game is slated for Q2 2015.	6 ^{/10}
GBA	LOST VIKINGS The cutest little Vikings you'll ever meet.	7 ^{/10}
GBA	CASTLEVANIA: ARIA OF SORROW We hear this was to be the title of the new Christina Aguilera album.	8 ^{/10}
PS2	GALLOP RACER 2003 Our Gambler's Anonymous sponsor won't let us play anymore.	7 ^{/10}

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-Steve Ringgenberg, HEAVY METAL MAGAZINE



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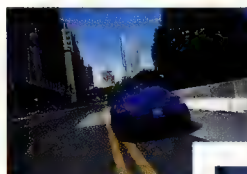
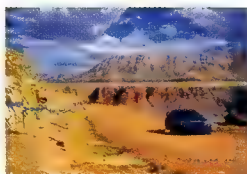
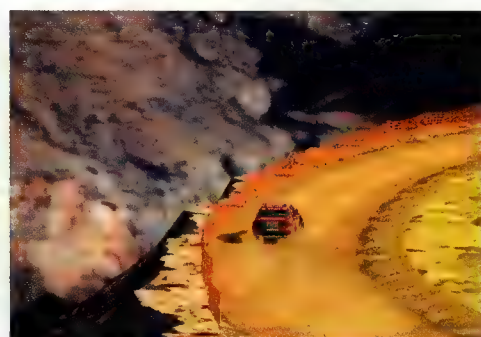
JOHN DAVISON

PS2 MIDLIFE

➔ Every system goes through it. The SNES went through it when *Donkey Kong Country* was released (look out for that one on GBA soon and see how long it takes you to realize how utterly boring it is). The PS1 went through it with *Metal Gear Solid*. Now the PS2 is about to experience it, too. What is it? It's that weird midlife phenomenon during which a game machine suddenly reveals itself to be much more capable than previously known.

Want proof? One look at this month's *Metal Gear Solid 3* screenshots should pretty much prove the point, and *Snake Eater* (no, I'm not sure what's going on with the name, either) will soon be accompanied by games similarly extending their elegantly manicured middle fingers in the general direction of the Xbox (that includes you, *Mr. Shamoan*). The top of the list has to be *Gran Turismo 4*, which, I must say, has me apoplectic with excitement even before I've spent any time actually playing it. By next month's column, I'll have had some time behind the wheel with this beauty and will no doubt bore you rigid with anecdotes of my prowess, or lack thereof. In the meantime, we should revel in the fact that we are finally starting to see all the good stuff that was promised way back when the PS2 was first announced. 📺

John Davison is Editor-in-Chief of the Official PlayStation Magazine.



A GRAN ENTRANCE

GRAN TURISMO 4 WILL OWN YOUR SOUL

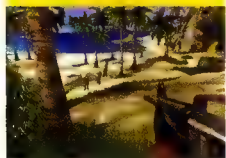
JAPAN

➔ These days, racing games are a dime a dozen—you can't turn left on the street without tripping over a pile of them. Still, just in time to save us from from all the crap we don't want to play is Polyphony Digital's highly anticipated racing game: *Gran Turismo 4*.

New for GT4 are tracks based in New York City, the Grand Canyon and Tsukuba, Japan. While the cars themselves look on par with those in *GT3* (and the subsequent *Concept Tokyo* and *Concept Geneva-Tokyo* games released in Asia), it's the backgrounds that have caught up

graphically. Not scheduled to release for quite some time (most likely 2004) GT4 should provide gamers with comfort in the anticipated online play/features, hundreds of cars, increased number of tracks and the downloadable cars via the PlayStation 2 harddrive. Vroom vroom! 📺

INFOMANIA! THE LATEST ON...



FAR CRY

We know what you're thinking: not another first-person shooter. But this one's going to be different. No, really—come back! It's not just the graphics engine that's stunning in that *Halo 2* sort of way. Nor is it the fact that you can zoom about in any vehicle you find, or that you can quite literally blow chunks...out of the ground with rocket launchers, that is, and then hide in the holes. No, what could make *Far Cry* a contender is what its makers at German developer Crytek describe as "action bubbles." It's basically a way of packaging events, but not pre-packaging them. The A.I. in *Far Cry* creates "bubbles" of action filled with individuals who react differently each time you encounter them. Which means you'll have a genuinely different experience each time you play. Of course, we've heard this kind of talk before, so we'll reserve our real enthusiasm for the hands-on time we'll have with the game at E3—but so far, so good. ☺

CLICKS

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One of the oldest and most respected enthusiast sites out there, GA boasts an impressive roster of alumni writers. The incredibly popular forum is of particular interest to anyone looking for insider information, or to bored GMR editors. ☺

IT'S IN THE CARDS

GET YOURSELF CONNECTED

TECH

➔ Nintendo has announced plans to release the GameCube SD Card Adapter in Japan on July 18. Originally shown a few years back with the GameCube hardware itself, the nifty gadget's release has long been questionable. The adapter plugs into the standard Memory-Card slot, enabling the GameCube to access data from an SD card (an item, of course, sold separately). The cards, miniature storage devices akin to Sony's Memory Stick, come in a variety of capacity sizes ranging from 16MB to 1GB. It remains to be seen how Nintendo-produced software will take advantage of the extra breathing room, or if the SD card will even be



➔ Nintendo's GameCube SD Card Adapter released in America (it's likely), but Nintendo developers seem to be fairly creative people. Just don't give us *Luigi: The Time Sweeper* and we'll be happy. ☹

More info at www.nintendo.com

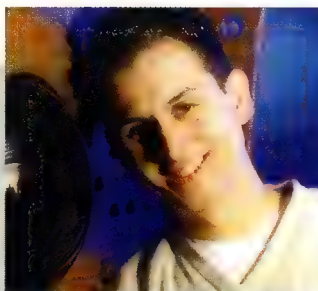
[TALENT] * ED DEL CASTILLO

REAL-TIME STRATEGIST EXTRAORDINAIRE.

➔ "When it comes to being a game developer, there might not be a better résumé out there than the one belonging to Liquid Entertainment President and co-founder Ed Del Castillo.

With the relatively young Liquid, Del Castillo has just one completed game under his belt—the underrated RTS *Battle Realms*—and he's currently working on *War of the Ring*. He's pretty excited about the chance to work on a *Lord of the Rings* game. "In some ways, it's like validation for all the pain we suffered for being geeks in high school," he says.

Before starting Liquid with Mike Grayford in 1998, Del Castillo worked with some of the biggest names in PC game development. After beginning his career at Mindcraft in the early '90s, working on games like *Magic Candle*, he moved on to Westwood, where he produced the epic real-time-strategy series *Command & Conquer*. Later, he worked at Origin with both Sid Meier ("most famous designer I've ever worked with") and Richard "Lord



British" Garriott ("best designer I've ever worked with").

Nowadays, Del Castillo is firmly dedicated to bringing great RTS gameplay to the *Lord of the Rings* universe. Based on the original novels instead of the movies, *War of the Ring* is full of dwarven armies and huge Balrogs, plus all your favorite LOTR characters. Says Del Castillo on developing the game, "It's like living in your childhood, only better. They were the first fantasy books I ever read." ☹

NINTENDO KNOWLEDGE

THEY KNOW STUFF SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO!



PHIL THEOBALD

GIMME AN "E"

➔ Nintendo has a long history of ignoring its peripherals—the Zapper, Power Pad, R.O.B., Super Scope, N64 Transfer Pak—all cool, innovative add-ons that could've opened up new gaming possibilities, but were instead largely forgotten.

From the look of things, Nintendo's going down the same road with its e-Reader accessory for GBA. Sure, there's some support for it, but not nearly enough.

Why, for instance, is *Animal Crossing* the only GameCube game to utilize the device? Granted, you can't store too much information on a card, but it could be used to unlock secrets, add characters, or open up minigames.

It's great to see the occasional NES game released on e-cards, but why is Nintendo limiting the technology to first-party software? If other companies could take advantage of the process, we could see all sorts of classic games released for GBA. Heck, some more daring companies could program new games released only on cards. They wouldn't be the most advanced games on the market, but if *Donkey Kong* or *Clu Clu Land* prove anything, it's that you can fit some great games on a few pieces of paper.

So come on Nintendo, don't let this add-on go to waste. If you play your cards right, the e-Reader could be a must-buy accessory instead of just an interesting footnote in Nintendo history. ☹

Phil Theobald is Reviews Editor at GameNews.

[BLIPS]

Cover Boy

2002 Heisman Trophy winner and No. 1 pick in the 2003 NFL Draft by the Cincinnati Bengals (sorry, dude), Carson Palmer is the obvious choice to appear as the cover athlete for EA Sports' *NCAA Football 2004*. And he will.

Sims-o-Rama

In a totally expected announcement, EA's *The Sims 2* will ship in early 2004. A fully 3D engine and Sims that age are two key features. In other Sims-related news, the console follow up *The Sims Bustin Out* will be out later this year.

XB

PC

PS2

GBA

GC

GMR CHARTS

THE TOP-SELLING GAMES FOR EVERY SYSTEM FOR APR. 03

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THEY KNOW STUFF SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO!

JEFF GREEN

DIAL "M"

➔ If there's one question I wouldn't mind never getting asked again—other than "When's *Halo* for PC coming out?"—it's "Do videogames make kids violent?" No, and whoever believes that needs to be beaten with a crowbar.

But, whatever. What I really wanted to tell you about was a scary bill written by the mighty moral midgets who waste everyone's time with this stuff. In late April, the state of Washington passed a law in which a fine of \$500 can be levied against any retail employee who sells a violent videogame to a minor under age 17.

Let me be clear here. I have a 9-year-old daughter, and though our house is full of violent games—thanks to me—she has never once played one, or even seen one onscreen. As her father, I monitor what she sees and plays. See, that's a little thing we like to call "parenting."

What's scary and infuriating about this law is just how hypocritical it is. Why doesn't any other form of entertainment face this sort of regulation? Why aren't they fining movie theaters for letting kids into R-rated movies? Or HBO for letting kids watch *The Sopranos*? And here's a good one: Are they going to start fining the U.S. Army for letting kids download its free online shooter, *America's Army*? 🐸

TOP 10 ALL FORMATS

RANK	TITLE	FORMAT	SCORE
01	DEF JAM: VENDETTA Some rap enjouures been getting' their' buy on.	PS2	7
02	SPLINTER CELL One of the best Xbox games ever comes to the most popular console, and it wasn't supposed to sell big?	PS2	8
03	LEGEND OF ZELDA: TWW There's plenty of wind in this game's sails.	GC	9
04	MIDNIGHT CLUB II Belonging to this club might be bad for your driver's license	PS2	8
05	NBA STREET VOL. 2 We may not have the best hops, but GMR has always been known for its ball-handling skills.	PS2	9
06	DYNASTY WARRIORS 4 Editor-in-Chief Simon Cox pronounces it "din"asty. Crazy Brits.	PS2	6
07	POKEMON RUBY Ask any overweight 36-year-old male: Nowadays, it's all about the <i>Yu-Gi-Oh</i> .	GBA	7
08	FINAL FANTASY ORIGINS Some old-school <i>Final Fantasy</i> lovin' up in here.	PS1	8
09	GOLDEN SUN 2 Good things come in small cartridges.	GBA	8
10	POKEMON SAPHIRE Sorry, we used up our dissing attack on <i>Ruby</i> .	GBA	7

XB

PC

PS2

GBA

GC

PS2 TOP 10

01	DEF JAM: VENDETTA	7
02	SPLINTER CELL	8
03	MIDNIGHT CLUB II	8
04	NBA STREET VOL. 2	9
05	DYNASTY WARRIORS 4	6
06	MVP BASEBALL 2003	7
07	TENCHU: WRATH OF HEAVEN	8
08	WORLD SERIES BASEBALL	8
09	SOCOM	8
10	X2: WOLVERINE'S REVENGE	5

XBOX TOP 10

01	NBA STREET VOL. 2	9
02	HALO	10
03	PHANTASY STAR ONLINE	7
04	NBA INSIDE DRIVE 2003	6
05	TAO FENG	4
06	RED FACTION 2	4
07	THE SIMS	9
08	WSB 2K3	8
09	X2: WOLVERINE'S REVENGE	5
10	MARVEL VS. CAPCOM 2	7

PC TOP 10

01	SHADOWBANE	8
02	BLACK HAWK DOWN	7
03	C&C GENERALS	6
04	POSTAL 2	0
05	BF1942	9
06	RAINBOW SIX 3: RAVEN SHIELD	8
07	FREELANCER	8
08	GALACTIC CIVILIZATIONS	8
09	TROPICO 2	6
10	VIET CONG	8

GBA TOP 10

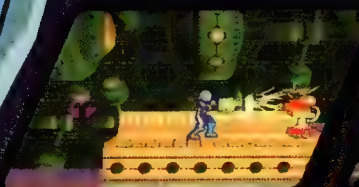
01	POKEMON RUBY	7
02	GOLDEN SUN 2	8
03	POKEMON SAPHIRE	7
04	YU-GI-OH WORLD	6
05	LUNAR LEGEND	8
06	LEGEND OF ZELDA	9
07	SUPER PUZZLE FIGHTER 2	8
08	METROID FUSION	9
09	SONIC ADVANCE	7
10	MEGA MAN & BASS	8

GC TOP 10

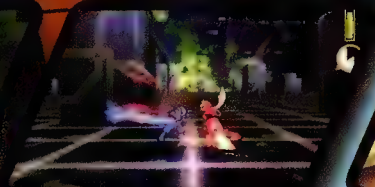
01	ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER	9
02	DEF JAM: VENDETTA	7
03	IKARUGA	7
04	SPLINTER CELL	8
05	THE SIMS	9
06	NBA STREET VOL. 2	9
07	METROID PRIME	10
08	ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2004	7
09	MARIO PARTY 4	8
10	X2: WOLVERINE'S REVENGE	5

MEGAMAN NETWORK TRANSMISSION

Mega Man's first adventure
on the Nintendo GameCube™!



Story-line tie-in to the Mega Man Battle Network games.



Collect battle chips to stop your enemies & solve puzzles.



Uncover secret characters from the Mega Man universe.

Join the Anniversary
BASH



MEGAMAN 15th



Mild Violence



CAPCOM

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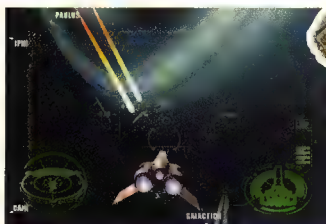
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Get ready for hyper-gaming.



→ It's a cornucopia of beloved franchises, from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* to *Futurama* to *The Simpsons* to *Battlestar Galactica*.



V.I. TO A KILL

VIVENDI UNIVERSAL GETS BIZZ-AYYY!

U.S.A.

It must be nice to work for a game publisher affiliated with one of the world's largest media companies, with tentacles wrapped around movies, television, music, and...sanitation. Vivendi Universal Games has that "synergy," as those who've taken a marketing class like to say, and the result is a whole slew of games related to well-known properties that should drive the kiddies— young and old—wild.

On the television side, two games based on Matt Groening-created shows will soon arrive on multiple console platforms. *The Simpsons Hit and Run* grand theft Homer's its way

around Springfield and features just about every character you'd want from the show. *Futurama* brings loyal fans of the show one last good time before it goes off the air. Also announced: *Buffy The Vampire Slayer 2: Chaos Bleeds*, which allows you to play as vampire or slayer.

On a supercool old-school tip, *Battlestar Galactica* is finally getting the game treatment. You play as General Adama (that's Lorne Greene to you and me), but the game is set years before the events of the show, when Adama was a mere ensign. It's essentially a straight space sim that straps you into the seat of a viper and blasts

you away, but you do get to pilot a Cylon ship in some missions.

On the movie front comes *The Fast and the Furious* from Japanese developer Genki, which lists *Tokyo Xtreme Racer* on its resume of racing games. The game will feature real-world cars from licensed manufacturers and aftermarket parts for you to create a complete rice-rocket package. Vivendi will also publish a game based on the new live-action *Cat in the Hat* movie, which features Mike Myers in the title role, mercilessly defacing our sacred childhood memories. ☹

More info at www.sierra.com

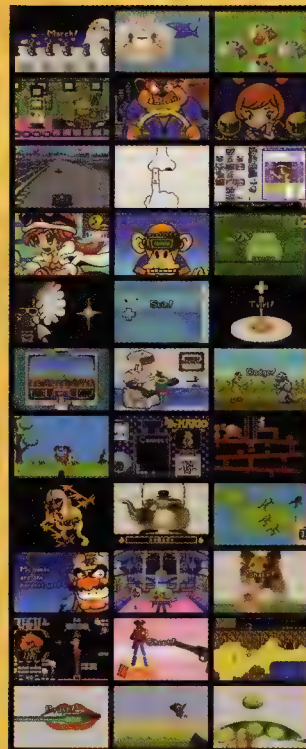
[BLIPS]

THQ & Relic

Publisher THQ Inc. recently announced that it has entered a two-property publishing agreement with Relic Entertainment, Inc.. Relic is best known for *Homeworld* and *Impossible Creatures*, two well-received games in the real-time-strategy genre. More news as it develops.

The Ultimate Handheld

What's thinner than a GBA with a crispy, backlit 640x320 Sony screen, ATI graphics accelerator, 2 SD card slots, built-in Bluetooth that plays video and has a sexy, contoured, brushed metal casing? An all-new gaming handheld from Tapwave, about which we'll tell you plenty next month.



WarioWare, Inc.
Over 200 lightning-quick microgames in one serving.



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GAMEPLANNER

JUNE
2003

CELEBRATE THE START OF SUMMER BY STAYING INDOORS!

01

Last month was USA's Armed Forces Day. Now, we take the time to honor the fighting forces of Brunei. Why? Well, why not?



02

New DVD releases: *Die Another Day* and *The Animatrix: The Second Renaissance, Part II*, and *Final Flight of the Osiris* are not to be missed.



03

Wakeboarding Unleashed (PS2, Xbox, GC), *Will Rock* (PC), *Midnight Club II* (Xbox), and *Ultimate Muscle* (GC, GBA) in stores today.

04



06

The Diesel-less sequel *2 Fast 2 Furious* opens nationwide today. Fortunately for us, we're 2 discerning with our money to bother.

07

The Republic of Cyprus, near Turkey, observes Kataklysmos, the festival of the flood. We find that a bit odd.

08

09

Donkey Kong Country for Game Boy Advance is released. Can the unveiling of the new *Donkey Kong* game be far behind?

10

Morolians beware: *Space Channel 5* is back on the air. The PS2 gets ports of both SC1 and SC2, while the GBA gets a version of its own.



11

Buffy the Vampire Slayer, previously seen only on Xbox, makes her way to the GBA. A little Buffy in your pocket never hurt anybody.

12

XB

PC

PS2

GBA

GC

13

Dumb and Dumberer opens today. Not the worst movie this week—the putrid *From Justin to Kelly* bombs even harder.



14

Did you know that raising the American flag upside down is a sign of distress? You'd do well to remember that, as today is Flag Day.



15

Father's Day gift protip: His mind might say "tie," but his heart is screaming "Game Boy Advance SP in shiny cobalt blue."

16

Midtown Madness 3 for Xbox crashes into neatly arranged store shelves today. Good thing Microsoft is insured.



17

Mace Griffin (PS2, Xbox, GC), *Soldier of Fortune II* (Xbox), *Sonic Adventure DX*, *Mega Man Network Transmission*, and *Hitman 2* (GC) released.

18

19

20

The Hulk, starring Eric Bana and Jennifer Connelly, opens today. You don't want to see him when he grosses under \$200 million.



21



23

Wario World is finally out, and after you finish it, play *Jet Grind Radio* and *Advance Wars 2* on the brand new Game Boy Player.

24

25

Midnight Club II (PC), *Street Racing Syndicate* (all), *Rock 'n Roll Racing*, *Mega Man Battle Network 3: Blue and White* (GBA)

26

Make your doodle creations do your evil (or virtuous, it doesn't have to be evil) bidding with *Magic Pengel: The Quest For Color* on PS2.

27

Charlie's Angels: Full Throttle opens today. Need a good reason to go see it? We can think of at least three...



29

Congratulations to Iowa, which celebrates its Independence Sunday today. Wait a minute, when did that happen?

XBOX KNOWLEDGE

THEY KNOW STUFF SO YOU DON'T HAVE TO!



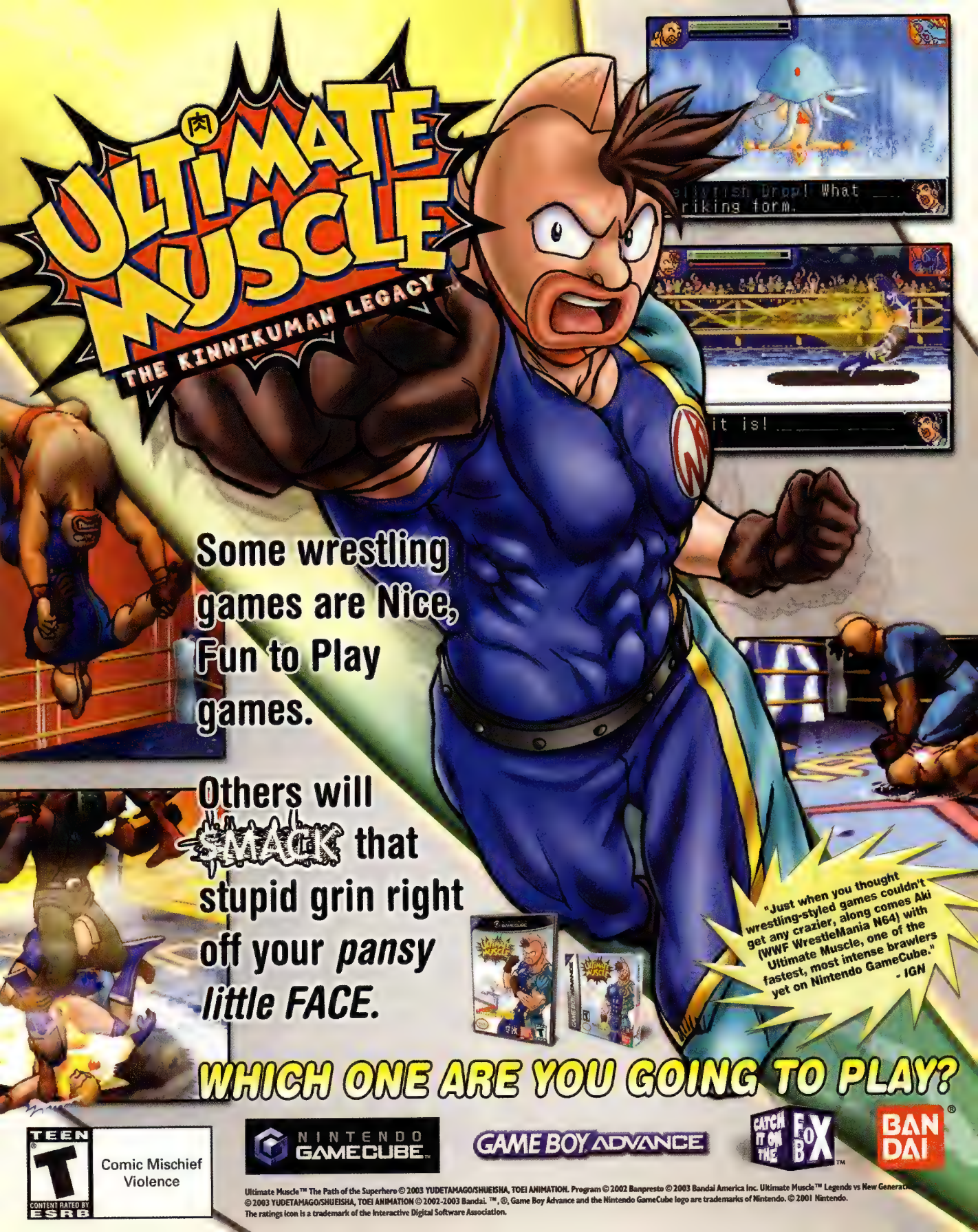
EVAN SHAMOON

XTRA BOX

➔ As E3 waits with open arms, the Xbox rumors have begun to swirl frantically. Perhaps the most interesting bit of news comes from Reuters, which reported that the "Xbox Music Mixer" (Reuters' term) will allow Xbox users to download music and Windows Media movies from their computers to their Xbox hard drives and then play them on the console.

Clearly, the implications are enormous. The promise of the all-in-one set-top box—which has seemingly been forecast since the dawn of the digital age—is now truly on the brink of becoming a reality. The thought of writing an e-mail, watching a DVD, listening to an album, playing *Halo 3*, and then surfing the Web for porn—all without removing my ass from the same seat on the living room sofa—has my brain in something of a haze. While my lazy bones find the prospect ridiculously appealing, the opposing horror is perhaps even more pronounced—that is, the thought of being forced to confront my maker on Judgment Day with six Twinkies in one hand and an all-in-one television remote in the other. The convenience, the "This film/song/website/game/intercourse brought to you by Microsoft"-ness of it all....These are the things that truly scare me. Now...uh...where do I sign up?!!

Evan Shamoan is Editor-in-Chief of Xbox Nation.



ULTIMATE MUSCLE

THE KINNIKUMAN LEGACY

Some wrestling games are Nice, Fun to Play games.

Others will **SMACK** that stupid grin right off your *pansy little FACE*.

"Just when you thought wrestling-styled games couldn't get any crazier, along comes Aki (WWF WrestleMania N64) with Ultimate Muscle, one of the fastest, most intense brawlers yet on Nintendo GameCube."
- IGN

WHICH ONE ARE YOU GOING TO PLAY?



Comic Mischief
Violence



GAME BOY ADVANCE



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GOT BALLS?

A SHOW OF FORCE COURTESY OF SEGA AND VECTORMAN

CANADA

➔ It's nice to see Sega starting to dip into its back catalogue with updates to games like *Shinobi*, revisitations of older games like *Altered Beast* (now on GBA, soon for PS2), and flashy new incarnations of games like *ToeJam & Earl*. But we couldn't be happier than when we heard it is reviving old green pal Vectorman for PS2.

Formerly composed of nothing but green balls, the new and improved Vectorman (who has developer Pseudo Interactive to thank for this third shot at the big time) looks part retro-robotwarrior, part Master Chief. During our hands-on playtime with the game, we found the controls, even in this pre-alpha state, to be near flawless, with excellent physics and a third-person control setup similar to Xbox's *Brute Force* (a handy first-person mode is included for gamers who prefer things up close). Yes, the green bot can still morph into a variety of weapons, and many signature *Vectorman* elements will make their way into the game, but the ace up this game's sleeve is its highly destructible environments, which put even *Red Faction*'s Geo-Mod system to shame. Is a pesky robot sniping you from the bridge? Blow that bridge up!

Not due out until 2004, *Vectorman* is a ways off from completion, but we're keeping a close watch on this one. **IC**



➔ Pseudo Interactive (in case you're unfamiliar with the name) is responsible for creating EA's cel-shaded racing game, *Cel Damage*. It has taken that experience and created an absolutely huge environment for *Vectorman*. Prepare to be shocked when you see it.



Vectorman back in the day

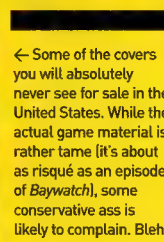


IMPORT SPOTLIGHT

MOTION GRAVURE SERIES (PS2)

➔ Reminding us slightly (OK, not slightly, a lot) of Atlus of Japan's first-generation PS2 wankfest, *Primal Image*, we're more than a little intrigued by Sony Music's new *Motion Gravure Series* (of which there are four versions, one each for breasty Japanese models Tomomi Kitagawa, Megumi, Hiroko Mori, and Harumi Nemoto), also for PS2.

In these games, you play the part of a fashion photographer whose job is to conduct virtual photo shoots with the model of your choice as she cavorts playfully for the camera. The girls, who are obviously only doing these games for the irony of it, engage in such tantalizing acts as blowing soap bubbles, crawling around on all fours, and splashing water. Need we say these games will never make it to the States? **IC**



← Some of the covers you will absolutely never see for sale in the United States. While the actual game material is rather tame (it's about as risqué as an episode of *Baywatch*), some conservative ass is likely to complain. Bleh.

THE GREAT ESCAPE

Shot down behind enemy lines.

A prisoner of the Nazi war machine.

You must guide your band of heroes in the
greatest escape in history.

Strike at the Reich with an
authentic WWII arsenal.

Commandeer motorcycles, jeeps
and other military vehicles as
you speed to freedom!

Attack from the shadows as you sneak
past Nazi guards and the Gestapo.



PlayStation 2



RATING PENDING

RP

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ESRB

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NEXT



INCOMING GAMES PREVIEWED



PREVIEWED THIS ISSUE:

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DOWNHILL DOMINATION	PS2	031
OFF ESCAPE 2	PS2	031
BREED	PC	031
NAVAL OPS: WARSHIP GUNNER	PS2	031
GHOST RECON: ISLAND THUNDER	XB	032
VIRTUA FIGHTER 4 EVOLUTION	PS2	032
SPY HUNTER 2	GC/PS2/XB	032
NCAA FOOTBALL 2004	PS2/XB	034
GLADIUS	GC/PS2/XB	034
P.N.03	GC	034
MAXIMO VS. THE ARMY OF ZIN	PS2	034
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CRIMSON SKIES: HIGH ROAD TO REVENGE	XB	035
LEGACY OF KAIN: DEFIANCE	PS2/XB	035
BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE II	PS2/XB	036
DISGAEA: HOUSE OF DARKNESS	PS2	036
LORD OF THE RINGS: RETURN OF THE KING	GBA/GC/PS2/XB	036
FREEDOM: SOLDIERS OF LIBERTY	PC/PS2/XB	037
RATCHET & CLANK: GOING COMMANDO	PS2	037
HUNTER: THE RECKONING REDEEMER/WAYWARD	PS2/XB	037
SOCOM 2	PS2	037



WARNING!

HAZARDOUS MATERIAL

Here at GMR, we preview games a little differently. To ensure that our previews are as relevant as possible, we feature only titles that will be released within 6 months. We also record our level of excitement about the game with cool little flames. Previews are not reviews—they're merely a guide as to how good a game-in-progress is looking. It's a snapshot. If we're not very excited by it, the game gets one or two flames. If we're taking a wait-and-see attitude, expect to see three flames. Over and above that, you can bet we're pretty excited. It's our duty to tell you what we think at every stage of a game's development cycle—positive, negative, or somewhere in between.

RELEASE | FALL

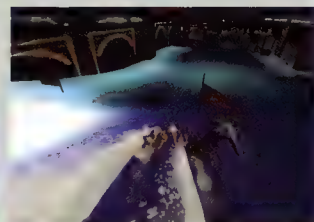
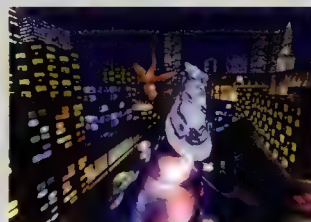
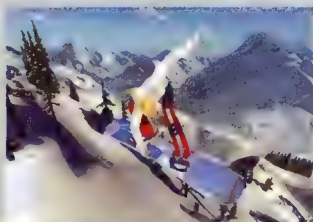
SSX3

□ SYSTEM GC, PS2, XBOX □ PUBLISHER ELECTRONIC ARTS □ DEVELOPER ELECTRONIC ARTS CANADA

EA CANADA'S SNOWBOUND SIM GOES BIG. REALLY BIG



→ Love 'em or leave 'em, *SSX Tricky*'s celebrity voiceovers proved EA's commitment to keeping production values high. No word yet on who might reprise their roles, but expect music from Queens of the Stone Age, N.E.R.D., the Red Hot Chili Peppers, X-Ecutioners, and the Chemical Bros.



➔ There's a new trend on the horizon. Influenced by such disparate hit franchises as *GTA*, *THPS*, and *Pokemon*, forthcoming games (representing platformers, shooters, racers, and other popular genres) are promising persistent worlds packed with side quests, random events, and a zillion things to find and collect. For the last two years, EA Canada has been quietly crafting *SSX3*, its own snowbound solution to this admittedly lofty ambition. What exactly is it building? Why, a mountain, of course....

For the tragically uninformed, the great-looking, great-playing *SSX* exploded on the scene when the PS2 launched and was followed by the sublime *Tricky* two years later. As a series, *SSX* sports more style, sex appeal, altitude, and attitude than most "extreme" (or M-rated) games you'll likely play.

Returning riders include Elise, Kaori, Mac, Moby, Psymon, and Zoe; newcomers Griff, Nate, Viggo, and sultry snow bunny Allegra round out the rest. Expect deeper customization, more Uber tricks (including some on rails), and the ability

to combo these moves, as well as more conventional tricks, endlessly.

The biggest news? *SSX3* takes place on a single three-peaked mountain. Players are airlifted to the top, then literally carve their own paths down the slope. While fans may lament the loss of cosmopolitan courses, EA is promising plenty of hidden collectibles and challenges, and a taste of all the urban, untracked, trippy, fantastical environments that helped make both *SSX* and *Tricky* so refreshingly myriad.

This seamless approach introduces

exploration to the series' primary play modes of racing and doing tricks. As they make their way down the mountain, players can board right into an array of competitions: Race, Big Air, SlopeStyle, and Super Pipe. Or, they can opt to simply cut off course for some free-riding. Either way, how and when characters progress is entirely up to the player...and gravity, of course. **B+**

GMA SAYS → Sound a bit ambitious? Chill out...this is *SSX* we're talking about, after all.

➔ HOW HOT... 🔥 🔥 🔥 🔥 🔥

XBOX

PS2

GC

RELEASE | JUNE

OUTLAW VOLLEYBALL

□SYSTEM XBOX □PUBLISHER SIMON & SCHUSTER INTERACTIVE □DEVELOPER HYPNOTIX INC.

THIS OR THAT. TIT FOR TAT...

➔ So. Your affair with Tina, Lei Fang, and Christie wasn't the tawdry tussle you sought. Fear not, dear hormone-addled malcontents, as even more gratuitous thong shots are just a bump, set, and spike away!

Outlaw Volleyball's cheap thrills and tawdry humor promise lowest-brow to the highest degree. In fact, Summer (a pole-dancing Ph.D.), Natasha (a leather-clad Siberian spy), and their gal pals make the lassies of *DOAX* seem positively demure by comparison. An equal opportunity offender, *Outlaw* also features a bevy of classless gents, including a hip-hopper, a redneck, a soccer hooligan, and a Latino lothario.

As with Simon and Schuster's other illicit sporting title (*Outlaw Golf*), *Outlaw Volleyball* enables one to wing out their

frustrations mano a mano. At any time, feisty players can single out another character for a faceful of fists, feet, and sand. In practice, the controls are simple, as is the combat.

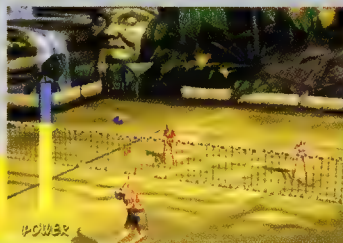
While the final product won't likely match *DOAX's* supple polish, the actual volleyball falls within more traditional bounds, as opposed to Tecmo's decidedly single-handed approach. The A.I. needs to be massaged into place, but competition against a live opponent seems solid. And, the option to play with three others at your home or via Xbox Live could be quite a draw—assuming you can stand the one-liners, courtesy of *The Daily Show's* Steve Carell. ■◀

GMA SAYS → Room for one more?

➔ HOW HOT...



CHEEKY
Outlaw's Replay mode enables you to cycle, rotate, zoom, rewind, fast forward, and pause. You'll have to supply your own lotion.



RELEASE | JUNE

MIDTOWN MADNESS 3

□SYSTEM XBOX □PUBLISHER MICROSOFT □DEVELOPER MICROSOFT GAME STUDIOS

MADDENING? OR MERELY MIDDLING?

➔ Our recent enthusiasm for *Midtown Madness 3*—part of a long-cherished franchise—may have been premature. While it's developing into a most ambitious free-form racer, we fear its sights may be set too high.

The single-player mode is set in the realistically designed streets of Paris and Washington, D.C.—both of which are teeming with flat- and four-footed traffic. Microsoft is infusing more "character" into this traditionally faceless genre, so we heard quite a few faux French *mon dieus* and ersatz American clichés as we made our way through the loosely linked mission sets.

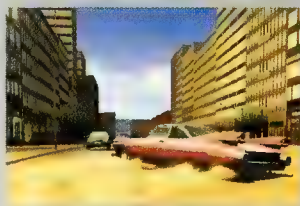
Hands-on time reveals a game (admittedly not final) mired in inconsistency. The directional arrow and

detailed map were often more confusing than crucial. Right now, the physics are similarly inconsistent—other cars bounce back from collisions, and getting stuck against corners or walls is irritatingly frequent. We often found it more effective to plow (rather than weavel) through traffic, as well as trees.

Remember, we *did* say "ambitious": *MM3* is packed with details, options, missions, modes, and an array of real-world autos that make for a tantalizing prospect, providing the prerelease balancing and tweaking hits the target. Fingers crossed, then. ■◀

GMA SAYS → Microsoft has the manpower to make *MM3* really move. But do they have time?

➔ HOW HOT...



CELEBRITY DEATHMATCH

□SYSTEM GC, PS1, PS2, XBOX □PUBLISHER GOTHAM GAMES □DEVELOPER BIG APE

Spiritual precursor to today's sordid spate of reality TV, MTV's *Celebrity Deathmatch* mixes sharp-but-safe satire, ultraviolence, and Play-Oh—of course someone picked up the rights. Gotham Games' upcoming brawler features NSYNC, athletes, porn stars, rappers, and washed-up TV "stars" ripe for the I-B00-C-D-L-L-E-C-T circuit engaging in claymated savagery. Could this be Gotham's first legit hit?

RELEASE | SEPTEMBER



➔ HOW HOT...



INCOMING GAMES

downhill domination → ape escape 2 → breed → naval ops warship gunner

RELEASE | JULY

DOWNHILL DOMINATION

□ SYSTEM PS2 □ PUBLISHER SCEA □ DEVELOPER INCOG INC. ENTERTAINMENT

FOUR WHEELS BAD. TWO WHEELS BETTER?

➔ Everyone deserves a break, and *Downhill Domination* marks quite a departure for Incog Inc., whose action-packed pair of PS2 efforts (*War of the Monsters* and *Twisted Metal: Black*) were hits both with critics and at the cash register.

You've seen plenty of this before, as it's a winning formula: extreme sports (in this case, downhill mountain-bike

racing), a colorful cast of cocky, clichéd contenders, and real-world sponsored riders, gear, and events available for the unlocking. A tweakable trick system and wincingly painful wipeouts are a must, and they go hand-in-hand with the requisite agro array of beats, scratches, and guitars.

If this sounds more than a little like *SSX Tricky*, which remains to this day

the premium blend of sports and style, well, that's because it is. Hands-on time shows promise—there are vast swaths of unfriendly landscape dotted with details and power-ups—but we're not so sure this new take on a well-worn genre will really catch on. **B**

GMA SAYS → An intriguing departure for the action-oriented Incog Inc., but is it the right one?

➔ HOW HOT... 



RELEASE | JULY

APE ESCAPE 2

□ SYSTEM PS2 □ PUBLISHER UBI SOFT □ DEVELOPER SCEJ

MONKEY SEE, MONKEY DO...REDUX

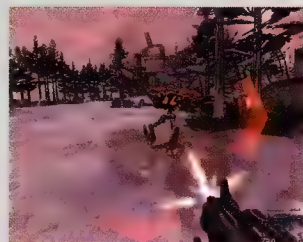
➔ Those damn dirty apes are at it again. Specter, the superintelligent simian with an inferiority complex, has outfitted his monkey minions with brain-boosting helmets and sent them through a time machine to conquer the Earth from the past. Unless you want to live in world full of flying feces, you'd better find those monkeys and send 'em back to the present with your trusty Time Net.

But you have to reach them before you can catch them, and that's where the player's 11 gadgets (*Ape Escape 2* has three new ones) come in, including a slingshot, an RC car for pushing floor buttons, a water cannon for dousing fires, and a Stun Club—just the thing for going LAPD-style on unruly primates.

A straightforward sequel to the PS1's most inventive platformer, *Ape Escape 2* has sharp new graphics and still-sharp old gameplay. We expect this one to be sweet...like a banana split. **B**

GMA SAYS → If you missed the first *Ape Escape*, keep an eye out for this worthy iteration.

➔ HOW HOT... 



RELEASE | SUMMER

BREED


□ SYSTEM PC □ PUBLISHER CDV □ DEVELOPER BRAT DESIGNS

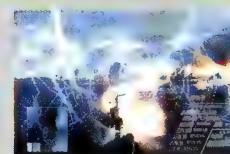
YOU HAD ME AT HALO

➔ Let's get the thing we're not supposed to mention out of the way first: *Halo. Breed*, for the uninitiated, is about as close as you can get to *Halo* without buying an Xbox. It does, however, have a different feel; more open-ended play (you can attack the various islands and buildings from several different positions, whereas *Halo* tends to be more linear), and the ability to swap between different squad members at any time.

We can report that *Breed* is looking good. In the first few levels we played, we manned a turret on a dropship and took out radar towers, thus providing for a smoother unannounced landing for the squad (robot death followed); we followed waypoints to objectives, took numerous fun detours, which revealed secret cave systems and other alternate routes. We spat grenades from our assault rifles, mowed down trees, sniped alien *Breed* tank drivers, and stole their stuff—including the tank. All in all, a job well done. **B**

GMA SAYS → We haven't felt this immersed in a war zone since...well, we won't say it.

➔ HOW HOT... 




NAVAL OPS: WARSHIP GUNNER

□ SYSTEM PS2 □ PUBLISHER KOEI □ DEVELOPER MICROCABIN

Take some old episodes of *Victory at Sea*, throw in some crazy Japanese sci-fi and a big helping of fast-paced strategic arcade action, and you've got a great-looking surface warfare simulator that should please fans of Koei's similar naval strategy/sim, *P.T.O.I.V.* Design your own WWII-era fighting ships, equip them with traditional or sci-fi weapons, then go to town on the open seas.

RELEASE | JUNE

➔ HOW HOT... 

PC

PS2

GC

GHOST RECON: ISLAND THUNDER

SYSTEM XBOX PUBLISHER UBI SOFT DEVELOPER RED STORM ENTERTAINMENT

POLICING A KINDER, GENTLER WORLD

➔ *Ghost Recon: Island Thunder* posits a near future in which Fidel Castro drops dead and the U.S. military kindly moves in to help Cuba build an orderly democracy. Naturally, smugglers, Castro's former lieutenants, and other ne'er-do-wells seek to seize power for themselves. It's your job to put bullets into those people. As with the previous *Ghost Recon*, players control one soldier in a squad, allies are computer controlled (in the single-player campaign) or by other players (online with Xbox Live).

Already available for PC as an expansion pack, the Xbox's version of *Island Thunder* is a standalone game and will be released at a discounted price. In addition to the eight single-

player missions, *GRIT* features 12 maps for multiplayer, including players' favorites from the *Desert Siege* expansion and the original *Ghost Recon*—additional missions and maps will be downloadable via Xbox Live.

It's about time the Tom Clancy games moved out of Eastern Europe. That's so 1994. There are plenty of dangerous madmen with guns elsewhere in the world—and Uncle Sam has to deal with *all* of them. As far as unstable locales go, Cuba is pretty ace, with their sunny skies and those drinks with little umbrellas. But business first. Lock and load! 🔫

GMA SAYS → If realistic military sims are your thing, well, then this is your thing. Uh, 10-4. Over.

➔ **HOW HOT...** 🔥 🔥 🔥



RELEASE | AUGUST

VIRTUA FIGHTER 4: EVOLUTION

SYSTEM PS2 PUBLISHER SEGA DEVELOPER SEGA AM2

MORE GAME. LESS MOOLAH

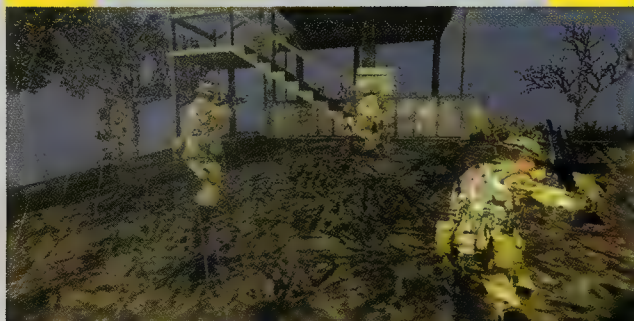
➔ If you are among the many who finally latched onto Sega's superlative *Virtua Fighter* series via last year's *Virtua Fighter 4*, you may want to pop that game back into your PlayStation 2 and get a little warm-up. This August, Sega will release *Virtua Fighter 4: Evolution* for PS2, and it will come complete with over 1,500 new items to buy via *Evolution's* addictive new Quest mode. Functioning something like *Soul Calibur's* Weapon Master mode, the Quest mode sends the gamer to a variety of cities and pits him against virtual VF pros from each area. As you increase in rank, you earn cash you use to purchase new items (like

sunglasses, wigs, clothes and jewelry) for your character.

Although *Evolution* loses the cool A.I. character mode from *VF4*, the graphics are sharper (and the game is faster loading), and the two new characters, Goh and Brad, should appeal to fighting-game fans who prefer the brutality of *Tekken* over the finesse *Virtua Fighter* is typically known for. The best part about *VF4: Evolution*? It will ship at the Greatest Hits price of \$20. Sounds like a great deal even for fighting fans. 🔫

GMA SAYS → Fighting-game fans need this game just as much as they need *Soul Calibur II*.

➔ **HOW HOT...** 🔥 🔥 🔥



SPY HUNTER 2

SYSTEM GC, PS2, XBOX PUBLISHER MIDWAY DEVELOPER ROCKSTAR SAN DIEGO

Spy Hunter was one of the few "updated" classics that wasn't completely terrible, so it shouldn't be surprising that a sequel is en route. Midway is revamping quite a lot, adding a redesigned G-B155 Interceptor, randomly generated paths, mission-based objectives, and eight new boss battles. *Spy Hunter 2* ships this fall. Now, excuse us while we try to get the *Peter Gunn* theme out of our heads.

RELEASE | FALL



PLAY OUTSIDE THE BOX!



NOT YOUR ORDINARY **GAME**
DEF JAM: VENDETTA PS2/XBOX

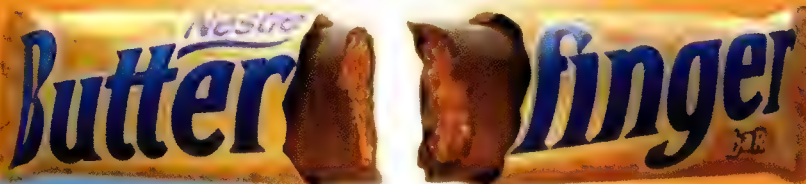
Three parts brawler and one part hip-hop video, Def Jam: Vendetta is clearly one of the most unique wrestling games available. Here, you've got a wrestler that puts gameplay before pageantry, offers action in place of entrance videos, and prizes super-sized special moves over the all-flair-but-no-pain People's Elbow. Plus, there's a story. And while the story isn't Pulitzer-worthy, it'll keep you battling through to the finale. The action starts with you picking a hero who's returning to his old stomping ground to help out an old friend who owes a dangerous man some money. His life's in danger, and since your old pal can't fight, you're drawn into an underground fight-club atmosphere ruled by money, power, gold chains, and cornrows. While the machismo gets laid on thick, it all works together here. After all, this game's backed by a rap label. The Def Jam crew members are the villains, with each artist acting as a boss. As you climb the ranks in Story mode and struggle to get the girl (well, girls—there's more than one), you'll earn cash, which you can use to buy attribute upgrades. There's all kinds of other stuff to unlock, too: new fighters (39 in all), stages, and even



swank Phat farm threads,
in case your wardrobe
is low on powder
blue track suits.



BREAK OUT OF



THE ORDINARY



BREAK OUT TRICKS

DYNASTY WARRIORS 4 PS2

GET THE ECLIPSE

Under the hard difficulty play the Hu Lao Gate level on the Allied Forces side. You must have a level 9 Star Pike. Defeat Lu Bu to get the weapon. You can get this weapon in Free Mode.

GET THE PHOENIX TAIL

At the Yellow Turban Fortress, as the Allied Forces under the hard difficulty setting, kill the following in this order: He Yi, Pei Yaun Shao, and Chen Yaunzhi. You must complete killing them in under six minutes.

The weapon will have +54 attack power and at Level 9.

GET THE CHARGE BRACER

Play the Sun Jian Invasion Battle Level on Yuan Shao's side. Before the enemy back-up troops arrive, enter the castle from the top. A supply team will appear to the south of the castle. If you defeat the Supply Captain of the Supply Team, you will get the Charge Bracer.



SWIFT CODES

TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER® 4

PS2/XBOX

Enter the options menu, then select "Cheats." Enter watch_me_xplode to unlock all cheats.

Enter the options menu, then select "Cheats." Enter homielist to unlock Mike Vallely and other secret skaters.



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RELEASE | AUGUST

NCAA FOOTBALL 2004

SYSTEM PS2, XBOX PUBLISHER EA SPORTS
DEVELOPER ELECTRONIC ARTS

FAT-FREE PIGSKIN

➔ It's easy to get worked up over the NFL, what with all the stars, their bling, and their appetency for prevaricating to the law. It's for this very reason that many so-called "football purists" prefer college ball—where a general love for the game seems to reign supreme, and the gridiron is peopled with eager kids who simply want to play some football.

NCAA Football 2004 is the latest title in a series that has seen its ups and downs, with this iteration feeling like its an "up" year. Gameplay in this version should be similar to last year's in many respects. Passing can still be difficult, while in the preview build we got our hands on, the running game seems to have been sped up a bit. The old game types

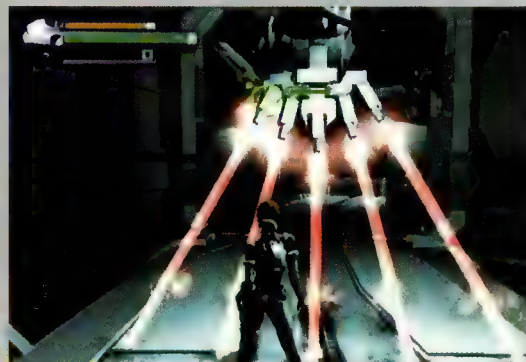


will be present in this year's title, including Dynasty, Rivalry modes, and single games. NCAA Football 2004 will also boast a ton of classic teams that you compete as or against, and hardcore types will enjoy being able to play in 20 of the greatest college games from the past 20 years.

NCAA Football 2004 ships in August for the PS2 and Xbox; only the PS2 version will include voice-enabled in-game chat. 🔥

GMA SAYS → Like last year's NCAA Football? We expect you'll probably love this one, too.

➔ HOW HOT... 🔥🔥🔥



RELEASE | SEPTEMBER

P.N.03

SYSTEM GC PUBLISHER CAPCOM DEVELOPER CAPCOM

SHAKE YOUR GROOVE THANG

➔ P.N.03 heroine Vanessa Z. Schneider was originally armed with guns. Soon after the game's unveiling, however, Capcom released a new batch of screenshots that showed her disarmed, and the company said P.N.03 would be based more on rhythm. Visions of Space Channel 5 danced in our heads, but P.N.03 is definitely more stylish shooter than rump shaker.

And really, what would a recent Capcom game be without a distinct sense of style? Why, it wouldn't be a Capcom game at all. Vanessa starts out dressed in a standard outfit, but you can spend the points you start accruing in the game's overly white levels on new suits (nine in all) that will increase your attack and defense power, as well as give you new special moves that are performed with the D-pad. Each suit has different upgrade potential: Some will have empty slots for palm-shot upgrades, while others will have more space for an increased energy bar. Some will even let you put your palm shot on autofire.

The biggest problem we foresee with P.N.03 is the inability to shoot while in motion. Players can't run and shoot, roll and shoot, or jump and shoot. Vanessa, for whatever odd reason, needs to stand still before unleashing a palm shot, which is especially frustrating when dealing with multiple enemies (who, maybe unfairly, are free to move and fire at Vanessa). She might as well be wearing a special giant bull's-eye suit. She does have a fairly quick sidestep maneuver, and many of the enemy machines aren't entirely smart, but it does seem strange that an action game would immobilize the player by design.

Capcom promises that the U.S. code will have new features and enhancements. For now, we'll just have to wait and see. 🔥

GMA SAYS → Normal mode is too hard, especially when you're standing still most of the time. Let's hope the alleged enhancements fix that problem.

➔ HOW HOT... 🔥🔥🔥

RELEASE | AUGUST

GLADIUS

SYSTEM GC, PS2, XBOX PUBLISHER LUCASARTS
DEVELOPER LUCASARTS

SCHOOL CAN BE CRUEL

➔ With three years of development time, LucasArts' new strategy RPG Gladius was conceptualized before Russell Crowe's Maximus made it socially acceptable for men to carry broadswords and run around in skirts and sandals.

Two lead characters (each with their own story line) are joined by a cast of warriors and animal combatants organized into gladiatorial "schools." Battle is comparable to that found in Final Fantasy Tactics: Strategize every move by considering such factors as character class, positioning, elevation, armor types, and status effects (for example, keep archers away from hard hitters and atop hills for maximum damage—thanks, gravity). Your gladiator posse can equip themselves with an exhaustive collection of weapons and armor,



all painstakingly researched. Not skimping on the production values, LucasArts has even recruited Hollywood talent to provide the major players' voices.

Gladius will release on multiple platforms, but all three versions are being developed in unison and to each console's strengths. It's obvious that LucasArts is putting a lot of effort into making Gladius a top-shelf RPG. Let's hope it sees the game through to the end. 🔥

GMA SAYS → Japanese RPGs are great and all, but we like seeing fresh ideas from out of the West.

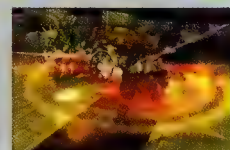
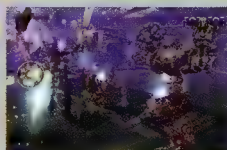
➔ HOW HOT... 🔥🔥🔥

MAXIMO VS. THE ARMY OF ZIN

SYSTEM PS2 PUBLISHER CAPCOM DEVELOPER CAPCOM DIGITAL STUDIOS

Last year's polished, if challenging, Maximo (a 3D update to the legendary Ghosts 'n Goblins arcade classic) wrought tears of gamer joy; the sequel seems primed to do just the same. Gone is the niggling coin/continue system, and Maximo will earn rewards by helping hapless NPCs who require aide of the heroic sort. Capcom is promising new characters, deeper levels, and a good time for all...

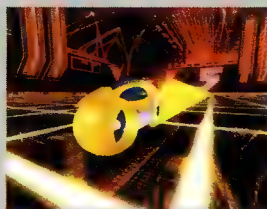
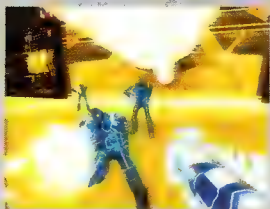
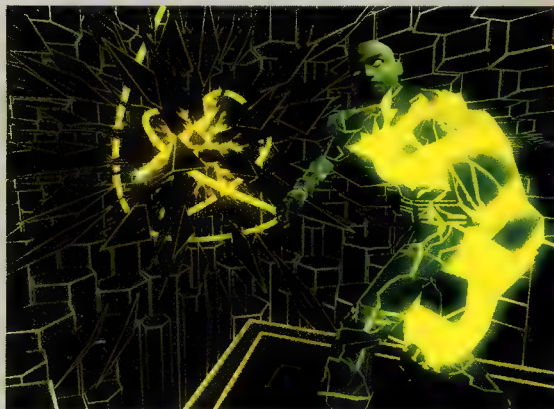
RELEASE | OCTOBER



➔ HOW HOT... 🔥🔥🔥

INCOMING GAMES

tron 2.0 → crimson skies: high road to revenge → legacy of kain: defiance



TRON 2.0

□ SYSTEM PC □ PUBLISHER BUENA VISTA GAMES □ DEVELOPER MONOLITH

BACK TO THE FUTURE. AGAIN

➔ **Tron 2.0's fluorescent cyberpsychedelic world might just be the right antidote for gamers weary of deep-space bug hunts and World War II sorties. What other game enables gamers to augment their own abilities and race light cycles to the death on an abstract grid?**

Twenty years after the events of the classic Disney film, ENCOM programmer Adam Bradley's work on a human digitization project—think Mike TeaVee in Willy Wonka's world—gets him kidnapped. Evil forces, it would seem, are planning to take over the world's computer systems by using his advanced technology. Again.

Adam's son, Jet, a talented game programmer with a slight attitude problem and a father complex to boot, gets tapped to save dad and the world. Armed with the

famous Tron disc, which functions as a weapon and a shield, and an arsenal of high-tech gadgets and weapons, Jet fights and puzzles his way through one of the coolest-looking computer gaming universes yet.

Players will be able to customize Jet's stats and abilities with an array of "subroutine" power-ups, making for some interesting decisions over the course of the game. Will you choose the enhanced jumping ability or a fuzzy signature that enables Jet to sneak up behind enemy programs and quietly disable them? A recent demo left us concerned that this admittedly deep upgrade system might prove too ambitious; otherwise, *2.0* looks well on its way to being great. **IC**

GMA SAYS → Can Buena Vista Games and Monolith deliver on *Tron 2.0*'s promise?

➔ **HOW HOT...** 🔥 🔥 🔥

CRIMSON SKIES: HIGH ROAD TO REVENGE

□ SYSTEM XBOX □ PUBLISHER MICROSOFT □ DEVELOPER MICROSOFT GAME STUDIOS

INTO THE WILD BLUE YONDER

➔ **Based on a board game and a good but slightly less than successful PC game, *Crimson Skies: High Road To Revenge* is Microsoft's latest shot at finally achieving legitimate gaming gold on the Xbox.**

Set in an alternate-history 1930s where the United States has split into smaller countries and all commerce and travel has moved to the air, *Crimson Skies* puts you in the bomber jacket of one Nathan Zachary, a barnstorming air pirate who leads a ragtag squadron of pilots and their fantasy aircraft on a quest to avenge a friend's death. While in tricked-out flying machines, you'll explore huge, fantastic levels that look like a Disneyland ride. Multiple missions and side quests, ranging from raiding missions on

huge zeppelins to air races for purse money, are included in each level. You can even hop out of your plane at certain spots to man anti-aircraft guns and other vehicles. There is a story line to follow, but the developer is promising gameplay open ended enough for you to play through *Crimson Skies* way you want to.

As *Crimson Skies* is coming courtesy of Microsoft, Xbox Live support is a given. Which means you can look forward to all sorts of dogfighting fun, including such requisite online modes as capture the flag. Buckles, prepare to be swashed. **IC**

GMA SAYS → Fantasy flying never looked so fun.

➔ **HOW HOT...** 🔥 🔥 🔥

RELEASE | FALL

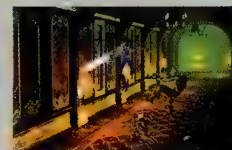
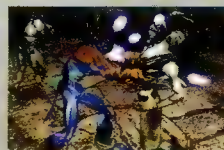


LEGACY OF KAIN: DEFIANCE

□ SYSTEM PS2, XBOX □ PUBLISHER EIDOS INTERACTIVE □ DEVELOPER CRYSTAL DYNAMICS

This newest chapter in the *Legacy of Kain* saga finds both bloodsucking Raziel and his kin, the soul-reaving Kain as playable characters. Players shuttle to and from the spectral plane, battling demons and solving puzzles. A sneak peek revealed the series' trademark dazzling architecture; Eidos is keeping with the times with more open-ended, gameplay, more compelling combat, and a suitably dark story line.

RELEASE | NOVEMBER



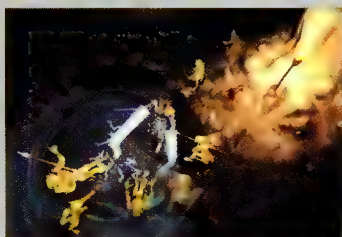
➔ **HOW HOT...** 🔥 🔥 🔥

XB

PC

PS2

baldur's gate: dark alliance II → disgaea: hour of darkness → lord of the rings: return of the king



RELEASE | FALL

DISGAEA: HOUR OF DARKNESS

SYSTEM PS2 PUBLISHER ATLUS DEVELOPER NIPPON ICHI

NETHERWORLDWIDE DOMINATION

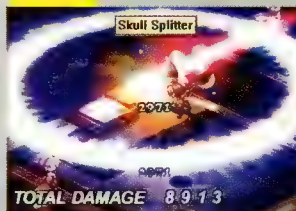
➔ The term "strategy-RPG" might recall images of characters with big heads and stubby limbs betraying god, brother, and country while delivering passionate monologues that question the very nature of faith and morality. *Disgaea* has more than its fair share of such melodramatic moments...along with dancing demonic penguins, cute girls with bat wings, and a twisted, quirky sense of humor.

Boasting an enormous ego to compensate for his diminutive stature, Prince Laharl is hell-bent on the complete subjugation of the dark realm. Building his army from a vast array of men and beasts, he'll stage battles across dimensions that

incorporate a robust blend of tactical gameplay features. Troop substitution, strategic tossing of units, reincarnation, and shamelessly elaborate combos and special techniques are rendered with ultrasharp 2D animation on a 3D field; in combat, a gratuitous damage counter rings in every hit as enemies are launched, pierced, pummeled and blasted. Expect plenty of superpowerful hidden bosses and secret areas along with the ability to carry your information over for a replay, as well as a choice between Japanese and English language tracks. **B+**

GMA SAYS → Given Atlus' track record with English translations, strategy fans should be tenting their fingers in anticipation...

➔ **HOW HOT...** 🔥🔥🔥



➔ **HOW HOT...** 🔥🔥🔥🔥

BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE II

SYSTEM PS2, XBOX PUBLISHER INTERPLAY DEVELOPER SNOWBLIND

BARBARIANS AT THE GATE

➔ Dungeon crawlers have been around since the bygone days of house-sized PCs, back when X's and O's substituted for what the kids like to call "graphics," but none is better than *Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance*, which combined the third edition rules of *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* with killer audio-visuals and 60fps, two-player hack-n-slash action. Imagine our surprise, then, to learn that a sequel is already well under way.

Dark Alliance II "leverages the technology" of the original game, which is to say it's a typical videogame sequel—incremental improvements without drastic changes. That's OK, as screwing too much with the *World's Finest Dungeon*

Crawler would be unwise. The biggest change so far is the addition of a new item-creation system, wherein players can collect and combine raw ingredients in order to whip up their own magically enhanced weapons and armor. There are now five customizable characters, whereas the original had but three, which means *Dark Alliance II* has a whopping 66.67 percent more character. And while few are going to play this game for its compelling story, the developer was gracious enough to include a nonlinear tale that sprawls across four acts and 40-plus levels. **B+**

GMA SAYS → *DA* was nothing short of brilliant; *DA2* promises nothing but better.

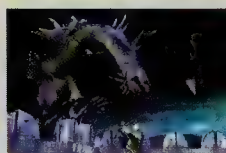
➔ **HOW HOT...** 🔥🔥🔥🔥

LOTR: RETURN OF THE KING

SYSTEM GBA, GC, PC, PS2, XB PUBLISHER EA GAMES DEVELOPER EA GAMES

Last year, EA's homage to the hack-n-slash *The Two Towers* proved licensed games need not be mired in mediocrity. Improvements to the sequel include Gandalf, Frodo and Samwise as selectable characters, and they engage in such classic arcade elements as jumping, rope-swinging, and picking up and throwing items. All that, plus two-player cooperative play and analog-controlled sword-swinging. Sweet.

RELEASE | NOVEMBER



INCOMING GAMES

freedom: soldiers of liberty → ratchet & clank: going commando → hunter: the reckoning redeemer/wayward → socom 2

» NEXT

RELEASE | WINTER

FREEDOM: SOLDIERS OF LIBERTY

SYSTEM PC, PS2, XBOX PUBLISHER ELECTRONIC ARTS DEVELOPER 10

FULL OF BOLSHEVIK

➔ A nuclear missile has destroyed Washington, D.C. The President has been assassinated. Foreign invaders are coming in from the north and the south. Believe it or not, these aren't current headlines found in the Drudge Report—they provide the basis for EA's new action game *Freedom: Soldiers of Liberty*.

Imagine a world where the Soviets have won the Cold War (damn you, bizarre Ronald Reagan!) and are in the process of occupying New York City. What better way to fend off a massive invasion force than with a small group of guerrillas? With the American armed forces apparently on permanent shore leave, you'll need to scour the sewers in search of fellow freedom fighters, who will either join you or choose to watch from the sidelines, depending on your charisma level (not everyone is a born leader, after all).

The more people you rescue and the more installations you capture, the more likely someone is to sign up for service. Get too many of your people killed, however, and chances are you'd be seen as the leader of a suicide squad. Once your team of ragtag rebels has been assembled, you can give them orders to launch attacks on enemy soldiers and equipment, take over and hold key defensive positions, or provide cover while you take on the Red Menace by yourself.

The PC version of *Freedom* will support up to eight players via LAN or Internet play, and both console versions will support multiplayer skirmishes (sorry, no co-op) via a four-way splitscreen, making it fun for the whole political party. 🔥

GMA SAYS → If this doesn't sound like a good time, you're probably a communist. Or at least a sympathizer.

→ HOW HOT...



SOCOM 2

SYSTEM PS2 PUBLISHER SCEA DEVELOPER ZIPPER INTERACTIVE

Imagine all of the best parts of the million-selling *SOCOM* with all the enhancements that you wished for. Developer Zipper Interactive trawled the Web for comments on the first game, and fixed all of the problems that its many fans have complained about. Expect better graphics, more natural feeling voice chat, two new online game styles, and new weapons—including a kick-ass rocket launcher.

RELEASE | NOVEMBER

RATCHET & CLANK: GC

SYSTEM PS2 PUBLISHER SCEA DEVELOPER INSOMNIAC GAMES

LOOK MA, NO UNDERWEAR

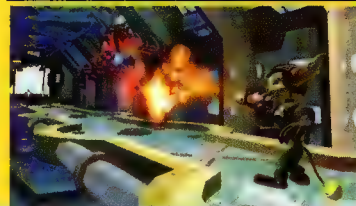
➔ It hasn't been that long since *Ratchet & Clank* showed us that a robot and a whatever-the-hell-Ratchet-is can get along and save the universe in the process (*sniffle*). But don't let this sequel's quick turnaround fool you. This time around, *Ratchet & Clank* are *Going Commando*.

Developer Insomniac has added an RPG-style experience system allowing you to level up as you bash baddies with a new array of weapons and gadgets. Your weapons and gadgets can level up, too—for example, the Grav Bomb can later be upgraded to a Mini-Nuke. To further add to the RPG-ness of the experience system, enemies have been given hit points, too. So while early foes will be easily dispatched, you'll have a harder go of it in later levels. To make sure you never lose sight of your enemies, the developer has added a superhandy lock-on/strafing feature.

The game finds Ratchet doffing green commando duds and going after a new boss—the CEO of Megacorp, Abercrombie Fizzwidge. Sadly, at the beginning of the game, robo-pal Clank decides to sit the adventure out. But we've got it on good authority that he'll be back, and that there's more Giant Clank to be had (wa-hoo!) 🔥

GMA SAYS → We go commando all the time, Nya!

→ HOW HOT...



RELEASE | FALL

HUNTER: THE RECKONING

SYSTEM PS2, XBOX PUBLISHER VIVENDI UNIVERSAL DEVELOPER HIGH VOLTAGE SOFTWARE

EVIL UNDEAD

➔ Last year's *Hunter: The Reckoning* warmed many twisted hearts with its M-rated blend of *Gauntlet Legends*-meets-*Resident Evil* shooting action. The game's gone franchise, with a sequel for Xbox and an all-new entry for PS2.

Redeemer folds a fifth character into the original's dysfunctional quartet (tattooed biker, multiethnic cop, fallen priest, and pill-popping raver chick) and addresses the nonexistent replay factor of the original game twofold: Playing through the game a second time earns additional experience and attacks, and killing enough of a specific monster enables that beastie to become a playable character—for example, say, a

decrepit zombie. Who wouldn't want that? *Redeemer* also makes use of Xbox Live, allowing users to download character skins, weapons, cheats, and characters.

The all-new PS2 edition, *Wayward*, forgoes linear level progression in favor of a hub system and supplements each of the 25 levels' mandatory tasks with optional and hidden objectives. Good stuff, but the two-player cap could prove to be a bummer. 🔥

GMA SAYS → Sleeper. Sequel. Franchise. With Vivendi Universal involved, can a movie be far off?

→ HOW HOT...



XB

PS2

PAGE

41

HANDS-ON!

MAGIC CARPET RIDE

SYSTEM: XB, PC, PS2, GBA, GC PUBLISHER: UBI SOFT DEVELOPER: UBI SOFT

THE PRINCE OF PERSIA RETURNS FOR A PROPER 3D ADVENTURE

➔ Taking a beloved classic franchise and updating it for today's gamer is a tricky thing. You have to find a way to make the changes that new technology requires (new dimensions, controllers, graphics, etc.), as well as make sure it's still a marketable franchise. But at the same time, you can't change so much that you alienate the very people who loved your game in the first place. Hearing Jordan Mechner talk about *Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time* with confident enthusiasm gives us the impression that the man who created the original *Prince of Persia* 13 years ago is well aware of this problem. As is Ubi Soft Montreal's Yannis Mallat, producer and point man for the project. Both men were part of the Ubi Soft entourage that recently stopped by the GMR office to give us the first playable go with the new *Prince of Persia*.

In the series' chronology, *Sands of Time* is actually the first event to take place. A war had been raging on the Indian subcontinent until a new prince led the Persian army to victory. He discovers an artifact—an hourglass—and claims it as a trophy for his prevailing army. Either through bureaucratic mishap or drunken reveling, the Prince mistakenly breaks open the hourglass, freeing the sand within. Normally, this shouldn't be cause for concern, but since this particular artifact is both ancient and mysterious, it only makes sense that an evil curse is unleashed upon the land. The Sands of Time sweep through the Prince's domain, transforming all living creatures (human and animal) into quite unpleasant monsters. Except, of course, the Prince himself—his sword renders him immune to the sand's effects. And since he's the guy who messed everything up, he puts it upon himself to make things right. ➔



WE'VE PLAYED
THEORY OF DEEP TIGHT KICKS AT THE

HANDS-ON!



XB

PC

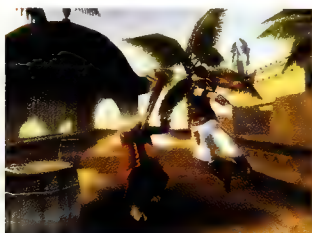
PS

GBA

→ Our demo begins with the Prince on a palace balcony, watching his recently possessed guards run amok throughout the courtyards below. The first thing we notice is the beautiful artistic direction of the game, drawing heavily from the Arabian fantasy worlds described in such sources as *The Thousand and One Nights*. The palace is exactly how you might imagine it: elegant, regal, tasteful, authentic. The Prince himself, while not looking entirely Arab, appears as a balanced mix of warrior and royalty. He may have a touch of Keanu in his face, but rest assured, he won't be acting (or speaking) in the same manner. When we raised the question, Mechner was very aware of the danger of letting his character devolve into a generic, shallow "extreme" action star, the kind that litters so many games and movie theaters these days. The Prince won't be spouting off corny one-liners upon dispatching an enemy, nor are his acrobatic moves exaggerated for the sake of style—the team is very concerned with how naturally the game plays. We won't call it realism, considering the premise, but everything about the game's design has to make sense. In terms of level design, everything has a purpose. If there's a wall, the Prince can run up it (or across it). If there's a ledge within his grasp, he'll hold on until you tell him to get up. Even the classic traps are integrated into the story (the palace's

defense mechanism has gone haywire) in order to avoid superfluous obstacles—there aren't any crates lying around with ridiculous power-ups or any mysteriously floating platforms. Everything is designed around the capabilities of the character you control.

As we watched Yannis Mallat play his game, leaping from swinging ropes and laying waste to possessed guards, we had some reservations about things like balancing on narrow ledges, cleanly landing long jumps, hanging on to the edge, negotiating difficult camera angles, and fighting off multiple enemies—gameplay aspects that have been butchered badly by many 3D action games prior. But when we played, our fears were quickly dismissed (well, most of them). *Sands of Time* plays very well. Once the Prince is up on a ledge, he's up there until you decide to make him jump off or until something intentionally knocks him down. Jumping from ledge to ledge is also an easy endeavor, and we didn't notice any instances where we were deceived into thinking we could make a jump that was actually impossible to land. The camera is controlled via the right analog stick (we played the PS2 version, controller setups on the other systems will be comparable), and there are no fixed angles. When the Prince engages an enemy, he must first draw his sword to enter Combat mode. He'll automatically target the closest →

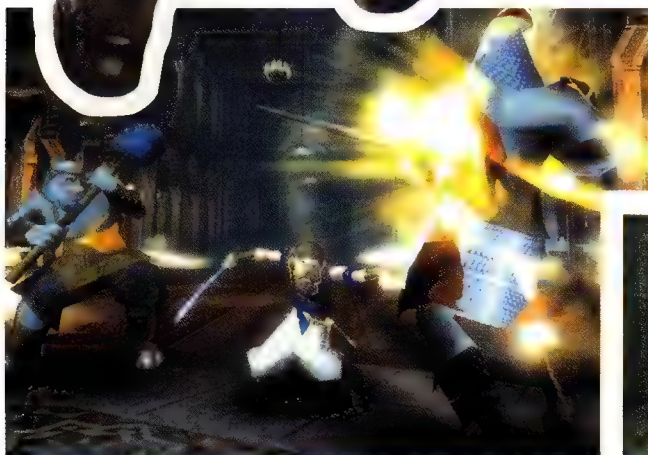


WE'VE PLAYED...

Prince of Persia The Sands of Time

HANDS-ON!

→ It wouldn't be *Prince of Persia* without elaborately designed and delightfully devious traps. The solution to this particular problem is to run over and activate the switches on the walls. But you have an advantage—at various points in the game, you'll be on the receiving end of mental visions presented as small cut-scenes. These visions will either provide clues to getting past upcoming obstacles or add extra narrative to the story.



→ Now, if that bird over there had swooped in and knocked you off the ledge, all you would have had to do is tap the Rewind button (provided you have an ample Sands of Time supply) to try the whole thing again. How do you get the Sand? Look below for a big hint. Not the most painless of procedures...



XB

PC

PS2

GBA

GC

→ villain (more on this later) and use a sword technique from his large arsenal to finish him or her off. Using the Prince's Wall Run skill to ascend the face of his opponent, flip over, and take an enemy out from behind is particularly enjoyable. But this maneuver may only stun the victim. To send him to his final sand nap, the Prince needs to absorb the Sands of Time that have been freed from his enemy's recently eviscerated carcass. With a small amount of sand in his possession, he can now have the ability to manipulate the flow of time. If you miss a difficult jump, hit the Rewind button to try it again. If you want an extra advantage in battle (or to avoid fast-moving traps), use Fast Forward to increase your agility. Mallat promises other functions of time manipulation, but we're not sure if there will be puzzles directly designed around the feature.

If we have any concerns, they are about the battle system—the targeting mechanism in particular. Auto-targeting is grand when you're only up against a solitary foe, but when they come at you in groups, it's more difficult to choose your intended prey. And since the enemy A.I. is going to be very intelligent and group oriented (some will defend your attacks, some will launch counterattacks, and others will break your own ability to block), having a solid defense becomes even more important. Fortunately, Ubi Soft seems to understand the issue, and hopefully, a solution will be found.

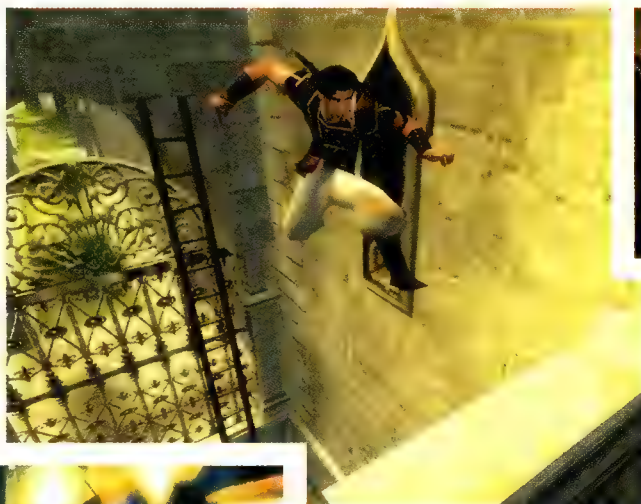
Without seeing Mechner excited about the project, we might be tempted to file *Sands of Time* with the other 3D action games we merely have a passing interest in. But after learning that working on this particular one has "reawakened the joy of computer games" in the man who created *Prince of Persia*, we can only be optimistic. ▶◀

TWO PRINCES

PRINCE OF PERSIA AS A 2D PLATFORMER? NAH, IT'LL NEVER WORK...



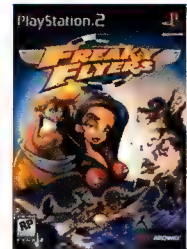
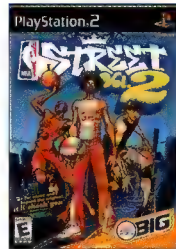
→ Some impressive things have been pulled off on the Game Boy Advance (*Iridion*, *Castlevania: Harmony of Dissonance*, *Street Fighter Alpha 3*), but cramming the console versions of *Sands of Time* into a GBA cartridge just isn't possible. The same team that did the portable versions of *Rayman 3* and *Splinter Cell* is working on a corresponding *Sands of Time* title that roughly follows the same story and design principles of its 3D big brothers. Ubi Soft is planning to include around 150 different levels, as well as connect it to the GameCube version via the GBA link cable.



→ The Prince begins the game with his standard sword, but he'll eventually find three more, each progressively more powerful. That yellowish-orange glow you see emanating from the not-yet-deceased bad guy over there is the Sand of Time. If you don't absorb it into your weapon quickly, it will flow back into the body, and he'll revive, ready for more.



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INSIDE THE GAME

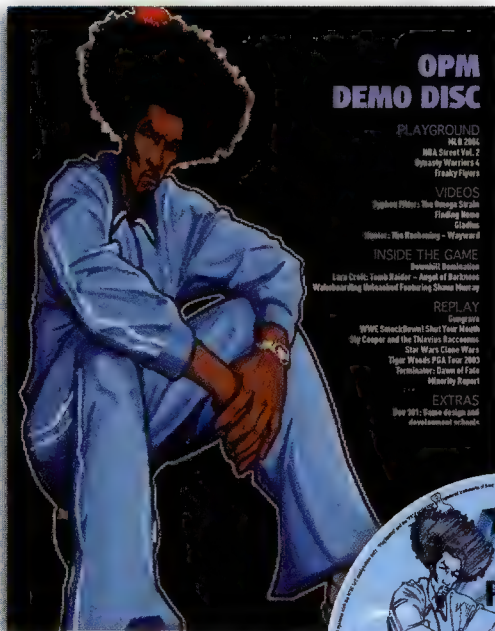
- INSIDE THE GAME
- DOWNHILL DOMINATION
- LARA CROFT: TOMB RAIDER-
ANGEL OF DARKNESS
- WAKEBOARDING UNLEASHED
FEATURING SHAUN MURRAY

EXTRAS

- DEV 101: GAME DESIGN AND
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- SYPHON FILTER:
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- FINDING NEMO
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P12
GRA
GC

FIRESTARTER!

METAL GEAR SOLID: THE TWIN SNAKES, BOKTAL
METAL GEAR SOLID 3: SNAKE EATER, HIDEO KOJIMA LIGHTS 'EM UP

ILLUSTRATIONS BY ARTHUR MOUNT

➔ Hideo Kojima is an unassuming man. Bespectacled, slim, mild-mannered, with a dangling crop of hair brushed to either side of his head—you wouldn't look twice at him if you passed him on the street, and yet this man has touched millions of people with his work. If fellow game designer Shigeru Miyamoto is the Steven Spielberg of the industry, then Kojima is the Ridley Scott.

While the obvious tech-savvy parallels are there, the thing these two directors have in common in terms of artistic vision is a similarly widescreen approach to their work. Even back in 1987, when he first unleashed the original *Metal Gear* for the Nintendo Entertainment System, Kojima was already setting the stage for the epic installments to come. In an age when the videogame industry was viewed as a toy or a trend—given a projected life span about as long as the Cabbage Patch Kids craze—*Metal Gear* was more esoteric than electric. The technology at the time could bear little more than people running sideways, jumping all the while. But in *Metal Gear*, a heretofore-unknown soldier named Solid Snake would do no jumping, no collecting of coins, and certainly no princess rescuing. Contrary to the “shoot first, ask questions later” principles of gaming culture at the time, Snake's primary concern was, of all things, avoiding confrontation. From a game-design perspective, this was a revolution, and for the next ten years or so, we would see nothing else like it.

Although Konami would release *Metal Gear 2: Solid Snake* in 1990 for MSX (a popular personal computer in Japan), that game never made it to North America, leaving stealth-hungry gamers high and dry until the eventual release of *Metal Gear Solid* over 10 years later.

Of course, some of Kojima's other games would make it here, like *Snatcher* for Sega-CD. Arriving in 1994 for that ill-fated system, *Snatcher* was an adventure game that featured many signature “Kojimaisms.” Beyond the *Metal Gear* references, the two-dimensional graphic-adventure format required the gamer to play close attention to the environments, lest a crucial detail be overlooked. The main character was also a dead ringer for Mel Gibson's Martin Riggs from *Lethal Weapon*, the way Solid Snake was originally inspired by Kurt Russell's Snake Plissken from *Escape from New York*.

Two years later, Konami released a sequel to *Snatcher* titled *Polcenauts* (3DO, Saturn, PSX), but sadly, this counts as yet another lost classic never to see release in North America. ➔

A BRIEF HISTORY OF METAL GEAR

Solid Snake's past is a long and storied one. *GMR* skips through the virtual minefield of past glories and recent successes. Read this and you'll be an accomplished Professor of Snakeology in no time!

PART 1

METAL GEAR

(MSX AND NES) 1988

It may not look like much today, but the original *Metal Gear* includes all the elements that make the series so popular: using stealth to sneak past guards and dogs, the T-1 and jarring noise when you are spotted, even the complicated, twisty plot featuring early appearances by Big Boss (your commander, who also turns out to be the enemy leader) and Gray Fox (who returns in two later installments). In another historic first, Snake starts the game with nothing but a pack of smokes and a smile.



Snake's Revenge

(NES) 1990

How can you tell that Kojima and his team had nothing to do with this unofficial sequel? There are four big clues: 1) It's not mentioned in the official series history, 2) it came out only in America, 3) the main bad guy is named (sigh) Higharolla Kockamamie, and 4) the game is crap. Well, maybe crap is a bit harsh, but it definitely wasn't the big step forward that the real *MG2* was. The overall structure, outside of some bizarre side-scrolling segments and a ho-hum story, are similar to the first game's, including a transceiver radio broadcasting info and hints, key cards, and a final confrontation with Metal Gear.



METAL GEAR 2: SOLID SNAKE

(MSX) 1990

This true sequel features a couple important gameplay additions—namely, the ability to duck and crawl and the now-familiar corner radar, which displays enemy and target locations. Colonel Campbell orders Snake to infiltrate the rogue nation Zanzibar Land, rescue a kidnapped energy scientist, and dismantle any nuclear threat. Snake encounters and defeats a traitorous Gray Fox on his way to finally destroying Big Boss and (what else?) another Metal Gear. The fact that America got *Snake's Revenge* while this excellent game was released solely for the Japan-only MSX system still makes us cry ourselves to sleep at night.



A BRIEF HISTORY OF METAL GEAR

PART 2



METAL GEAR SOLID

(PS1, PC, BLEEM) 1998

Metal Gear finally goes 3D, and in the process becomes one of the best-known and most influential games ever. The refined gameplay takes full advantage of the third dimension, with a groundbreaking cinematic presentation and a powerful engine allowing players to sneak along walls, under trucks, and right up behind unsuspecting guards in order to snap their necks. The story has Snake befriendi the scientist Otacon and making up with Gray Fox (now dressed like a robotic ninja), getting betrayed about 50 times, and stopping his genetic "twin brother," Liquid Snake, from destroying the world with Metal Gear Ray. But the true mastermind of this plot and his henchman, Revolver Ocelot, survive...

METAL GEAR SOLID:
VR MISSIONS

(PS2) 1999

A collection of short weapon- and skill-based levels, *VR Missions* completely did away with story and instead concentrated on the nuts and bolts of *MGS*' gameplay. As players complete missions, they unlock the right to get closer and closer to the game's female stars in a special photo-taking stage. (Sound perverted? Well, yeah, it pretty much is.) More important, fans finally get to play as the Ninja, complete with bullet-deflecting sword and stealth-camouflage invisibility. In Japan, this bonus disc was bundled with a re-release of the main *MGS* game, titled *MGS: Integral*, which allowed movement (but not shooting) in first-person mode.



METAL GEAR SOLID

(GAME BOY COLOR) 2000

This pint-sized *MGS* lets you slide along walls, make noises to distract guards, crawl under desks, sneak around under boxes—just about every cool feature and character (Mei Ling and Campbell) and most of the items (infrared goggles, Nikita missile launcher, etc.) from its PS1 big brother are included. The plot may sound familiar by now—Snake returns to the Outer Heaven setting of the original game to stop a nuclear threat, only to befriend another scientist and destroy another Metal Gear—but it actually holds quite a few surprises along the way. Other than the name change of "cigarette" to "fogger," there is little evidence of anything being dumbed-down for the more kid-friendly console.

KOJIMA ON HIS *MGS* STAFF

"FOR MOST OF (MY STAFF), METAL GEAR SOLID WAS THE FIRST GAME THEY WORKED ON."

no. 5 TOP FIVE METAL GEAR MOMENTS

SNAKE MAKES HIS "O" FACE (*MGS2*)

Stare at the poster of the bikini-clad tomato in the tanker locker room in *MGS2* for about 10 seconds and then call Otacon on your Codec radio. You'll see Snake playing with his...uh...well, his snake (press R1 or R2 during the conversation for more funny comments). Not the typical scene you might expect in a Greatest Moments retrospective, but it's the perfect example of the offbeat humor and ridiculous amount of detail Kojima and his team pour into every *Metal Gear*.



"Mom!?"

OK...MAYBE NOT SO BRIEF

3

➔ Never one to rest on his laurels, Kojima and his team kept working. Over the past 14 years or so, they've established, perhaps unintentionally, a pattern of releasing a game approximately every two years. With that in mind, we fast-forward to 1998. *Metal Gear Solid* shook the gaming landscape when it arrived in October of that year—perhaps even more than Shigeru Miyamoto's *Super Mario 64* did two years earlier. Now that the videogame was no longer considered a fad and was actually on the brink of becoming the next major entertainment medium (outgrossing even Hollywood in the race for consumer

the moment, the most spectacular cinematics ever seen in a videogame.

First shown on video at the Electronics Entertainment Expo in Atlanta in 1997, *Metal Gear Solid* quickly became the "it" game everyone was talking about. For the next two years, it dominated media coverage in ways no game, save a *Super Mario* or *Final Fantasy* game, had. Watching Snake emerge from the water, seeing the helicopter take flight, and absorbing all the various cut-scenes offering glimpses of Psycho Mantis, Vulcan Raven, and all the other events to come was nothing short of breathtaking. That Kojima could trigger the same Pavlovian response with the first sighting of the *Sons of Liberty* trailer (showing old friend Snake running through the halls of a tanker as the ship blew up around him) in 2000 was a sure sign that he was a man working at the height of his powers.

Now that *Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty* (2001) is once again fresh in our heads, thanks to the repackaging of the game as *MGS2: Substance* (Xbox, PS2, PC), the mind turns to Kojima's next wave of projects. While his development team has already released *ZOE: The 2nd Runner* this year (see *GMR* #3), Kojima, in a surprising show of force, has no fewer than three games in the works: *Metal Gear Solid: Twin Snakes* (a re-creation of the groundbreaking PSX classic using the *MGS2* engine), *Boktai*, an innovative vampire-hunting game for GBA using a special light-sensor; and—surprise!—*Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater*. It's Kojima's world—we just live in it. **16**

METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SONS OF LIBERTY

(PS2) 2001

Wow, OK, let's see: Turns out Snake has another genetic brother, Solidus Snake, who is out to topple the U.S. government—but only because it has become corrupt. And Revolver Ocelot is back, helping him. And the Ninja is back, but it's not really the Ninja, and Colonel Campbell thinks he's a spotted owl, and Otacon had sex with his mom or something...To tell you the truth, *MGS2*'s ridiculously convoluted story is a blur most of us would rather forget. However, the game's polished controls, incredible graphics, and better-than-ever gameplay (including an indispensable new first-person shooting mode) are what we'll always remember.



THE DOCUMENT OF METAL GEAR SOLID 2

(PS2) 2002

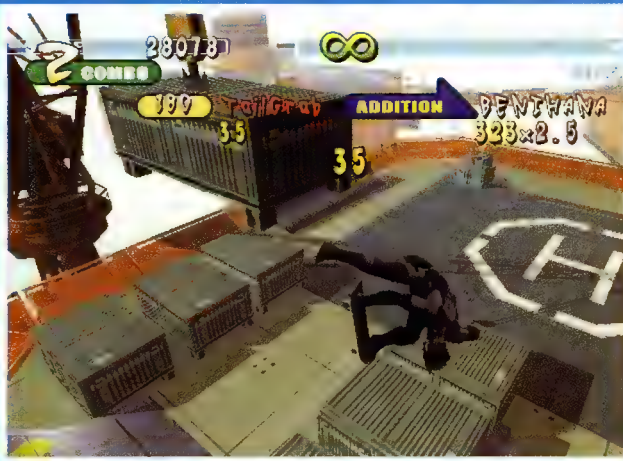
Want to see Kojima and Co. tour New York City or clear an office Special Forces style? Did you know that Snake's first words in *MGS2* ("Sorry I made you wait") were also meant as an apology to all of us who waited for the sequel? Curious about rooms and sections cut from the final game (including the scene of Arsenal Gear beached in Manhattan, removed after 9/11)? Character models, cinemas, script revisions, you name it—this fan-service disc has it all. It's enough to make any obsessive *Metal Gear* nut's snake go, er, "solid."



METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SUBSTANCE

(XBOX, PS2, PC) 2002

This *MGS2* re-release does indeed have *Substance*—included are both the original *Sons of Liberty* game and a whole mess of VR training missions, featuring levels for both Snake and Raiden that are based around each weapon, as well as other various challenges (some so devious that, at times, the game resembles a puzzler more than an action title). The PS2 version includes a skateboarding level in which Snake can grind along the bars and rails of a Big Shell platform. The Xbox version includes, strangely, slowdown whenever it rains. Go figure.





THE REBIRTH OF COOL

WHAT'S OLD IS NEW ONCE AGAIN. CAN SILICON KNIGHTS RE-CREATE THE MAGIC OF METAL GEAR SOLID?

➔ "Nintendo approached us and said, 'How about *Metal Gear Solid* for the GameCube?' We accepted the offer," explains Hideo Kojima when asked how his PlayStation classic became one of the most hotly anticipated games for the current-generation GameCube. Unlike the cheapo *Resident Evil 2* and *3* ports for Nintendo's colorful box, this version of *MGS* is no quick conversion. Rebuilt from the ground up, *Metal Gear Solid: The Twin Snakes* is essentially an entire new experience using *Metal Gear Solid 2*'s engine (ported and improved by the veteran GameCube coders of Silicon Knights) and gameplay enhancements.

Why exactly did Kojima-san ask Silicon Knights (*Legacy of Kain*, *Eternal Darkness*) to handle the coding duties instead of managing the project in-house? "Unfortunately, no one on my *MGS* team has developed for the GameCube," he explains. "I talked to Nintendo and Mr. Miyamoto, and asked them to refer a development team that shares my vision of game development. Mr. Miyamoto recommended Silicon Knights. One day, Denis Dyack (president of Silicon Knights), his core team, and my team got together at a Chinese restaurant. We talked about our 'souls' for videogame creation. As their name says, they are true knights. They understood us very well as the samurai we are. It only took a couple hours to get along really well."

Nice work if you can get it. It's not every day your development team is asked to reinterpret one of the most influential games in the history of videogames. But with critically acclaimed and commercially successful games like *Blood Omen: Legacy of Kain* (PS1, PC) and *Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem* (GC) under its belt, Silicon Knights clearly has the chops. *Twin Snakes* is obviously in good hands, and beyond his own team's inexperience with the GameCube hardware, Kojima obviously has other projects that require his full attention.

"I am currently working on *Boktai* and *Metal Gear Solid 3*. I cannot work on *MGS* hands-on. But my team in Tokyo and the Silicon Knights team are working close together on this project. I do my part as supervisor," he said.

Despite the fact that Kojima-san is observing the game's development from afar, the results look extremely promising. Silicon Knights has been working on GameCube hardware since it first became available, so the team knows the ins and outs as well as anyone, including Nintendo's internal development teams. And in case you

no. 4 TOP FIVE METAL GEAR MOMENTS

"I FEEL ASLEEP!" (MGS)

So says the very first guard you come across in the very first *Metal Gear* before he "feels asleep" again, with big Zs floating above his head to drive the point home. In stark contrast to every other game at the time, the *Metal Gear* franchise would be built on the unique idea that quietly sneaking by enemies could be just as fun and exciting as charging in, guns-a-blazin'. And so, with those (badly translated) words, the stealth-action genre was born.



haven't noticed, the company's experience shows in *Twin Snakes*' vastly improved graphical presentation (see Then and Now sidebar). That's no surprise, considering the difference in power between the original PlayStation and the GameCube. The most interesting change, however, is the overhaul to the game mechanics. You'll still be able to press flat up against walls and to crawl under tanks and through ventilation ducts, but now, you'll also be able to pull off the moves that made *MGS2: Sons of Liberty* such a blast. Things you couldn't do in the original *MGS*, like engaging in first-person shooting action, using the tranquilizer gun, and executing ledge-hanging evasive moves, are now an option. To keep things balanced, enemies can also do what their *MGS2*-enhanced brethren can, like use riot shields. Their numbers have also increased, making stealthy movements through the levels more challenging for newbies and veterans alike.

A lot of this, obviously, could not have been done easily on the original PlayStation, even though Kojima once claimed that he was finally able to realize his vision with that hardware. So how does he feel about *MGS* now, in retrospect—has the GameCube opened up new gameplay possibilities that weren't previously possible? "When I am working on *MGS3*," he says, "I never think about trying to do what I couldn't do in the previous game. I do my best with each game to do everything I want to do in that game, and I never think about

THEN AND NOW

Five years can make a big difference in the way a game looks, especially when it gets a facelift like the one *The Twin Snakes* is getting.

It happens in Hollywood all the time: the dreaded remake. Old classic movies get remade by ambitious (or creatively bankrupt) younger directors all the time, often with mixed results. Even more common are popular songs that get murdered (like William Shatner doing *Lucy in the Sky With Diamonds*). Rarely, however, do videogames get a second lease on life, let alone a good second lease. But

Capcom did a bang-up job with the new *Resident Evil*, and now *Metal Gear Solid* gets a fresh lick of paint. To illustrate how drastic the change is, we offer these comparison shots of the opening scene in which Snake emerges from the water in both the PS1 version and the new hotted-up GameCube version. If you need more words to help describe what's going on, you need a new set of eyes, sir.



saving stuff for the next."

"But of course, there are always things that don't make it into a game. When I start working on my next game, I do not place those 'leftovers' high on my priority list. I value my new desires more highly. *MGS1* was developed and released for PS1. This version is for GameCube, and I always have in mind the question, 'What should *MGS1* be like for GameCube in the year 2003?'"

That said, *Metal Gear Solid* in 2003 will feature even more of the intimidating

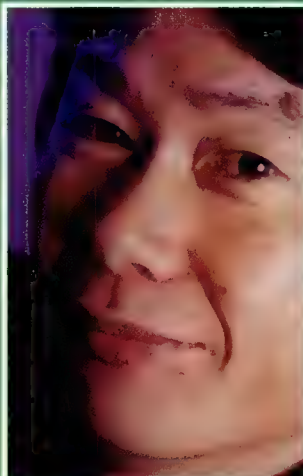
attention to detail that Kojima made famous in *MGS2*. Will things like melting ice cubes and destructible objects (like watermelons) make their way into the new game? "Certainly," he says.

"However, I would like to emphasize the introduction of 'external blood' such as Silicon Knights and film director Ryuhei Kitamura (who directed the cinemas), more than such details. I personally look forward to seeing this new hybrid *MGS*. What's more important than details is the fact that you can play the most popular ➔

GC

GLEAMING THE CUBE

We talk with Shigeru Miyamoto (he made, uh, *Super Mario 64*) about bringing *Metal Gear Solid* (and *Boktai*) to the Cube.



HOW DID YOU ARRANGE FOR HIDEO KOJIMA TO BRING METAL GEAR SOLID TO THE GAMECUBE?

Mr. Kojima and I have known each other for quite some time. Whenever we met, both of us would say, "Why don't we make a game together someday?" About a year ago, Mr. Kojima told me passionately about *Metal Gear Solid*, exclusive for GameCube. Since his proposal was exactly what I had been meaning to bring up, we agreed on the spot and the project was started quickly.

HOW CLOSELY ARE YOU MONITORING THE GAME AND IS THERE ANYTHING YOU'RE DOING SPECIFICALLY TO HELP THE TEAM WITH THE PROJECT?

The development of game content is led by Konami's developers, and Nintendo has been helping more with the supportive and cooperative works, such as supporting them in the finishing touches so the unique

abilities of the GameCube can be utilized; preparing a good dev-kit environment for producing good visual and audio performances; and facilitating communications with Silicon Knights (the Canada-based development team), and many other operational affairs. Of course, we are cooperating with Konami in the area of connectivity with GameBoy Advance.

Since we are heading toward the completion of the game, I believe I will be involved more by actually playing the game.

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT BOKTAI? THE LIGHT-SENSITIVE FUNCTION IS A VERY INNOVATIVE IDEA. BETWEEN ANIMAL CROSSING AND BOKTAI IT SEEMS "TIME" IS THE NEXT BIG INNOVATION IN GAMES. PLEASE COMMENT

At Nintendo, we have been making games which make use of interactions among players, such as in *Mario Kart* and *Smash Brothers*, that include four-player Battle mode. In most of these games, game programming determines how the interactions between the players should be made. As we have been trying to expand the world of play, we have incorporated the time element into *Animal Crossing* and *Pokemon*. Also, in these games, reaching the goal is not the ultimate purpose of playing. It is easier to realize this type of "expansion of play" when we are making ROM cartridge-based games. In *Boktai*, I am personally attracted to the connection between the sensor and weather conditions. ☀



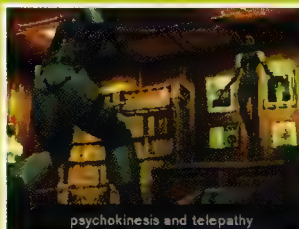
KOJIMA ON SILICON KNIGHTS' WORTHINESS

"AS THEIR NAME SAYS, THEY ARE TRUE KNIGHTS. THEY UNDERSTOOD US VERY WELL AS THE SAMURAI WE ARE."

no. 3 TOP FIVE METAL GEAR MOMENTS

PSYCHO MANTIS READS OUR MIND (MGS)

Kojima loves using clever tricks to freak out the player, and there's no better example of this than just before you fight the psychic sub-boss, Psycho Mantis. When he reads your mind, Mantis actually checks statistics on how you've played the game up to that point (number of kills, how many times you've been spotted, etc.) before stating whether you're aggressive or careful. Then, he looks for any other Konami game saves on your Memory Card to complete your profile. "So, you like *Castlevania*?"



psychokinesis and telepathy



Now I'll read more deeply into your soul.

➔ story for an action game [*MGS1*] on the game system with a very high level of freedom [*MGS2*]."

In a sobering moment, we noted that *Metal Gear Solid*'s story about nuclear appropriation and its various terrorist themes rings slightly truer today than it did in 1998. Maybe Kojima-san knows something we don't...

"The information and research materials available to me are the same as those available to everyone else. I am not a prophet—it is all imagination. I am not happy if my imaginations come true, especially when many of my imaginations are coming true in negative directions."

On the subject of negativity, *Metal Gear* fans will recall *MGS* having two endings: one in which love-interest Meryl dies (if you wuss out on the electric bed) and one in which she doesn't. So, Kojima-san, which ending was the truest one? Philosophically, he told us, "both endings are true endings. Fighting violence or submitting to it is a situation in war. I hate multendings where you have to keep hitting bad endings in order to reach the good ending. There is only one ending to *MGS1*. Whether or not you submit to the torture, the theme and message of *MGS1* is the same."

With that in mind, we expect to have to stand up to Revolver Ocelot's torture once again. But anyone expecting any other major changes had best think again. With regard to item placement and all the rampant running around you do near the end of the game, Kojima notes, "There will be no drastic

THE USUAL SUSPECTS

The cast of characters in *Metal Gear Solid* rivals the Addams Family for sheer diversity and bent personalities. *GMR* provides an insightful look at some of the more standout members of this peculiar lineup. Caution: Spoilers lurk ahead. Don't say we didn't warn you. No way.

LIQUID SNAKE



Snake's emotionally troubled twin clone brother, Liquid, has a wussy accent and a major inferiority complex. Where the hell did this guy grow up? Boston? Anyway, by the time all the disparate plot details fall into place, you're first kicking his ass into shape, and then racing down a dark tunnel unloading a gatling gun in his face. Excellent stuff!

MERYL SILVERBURGH

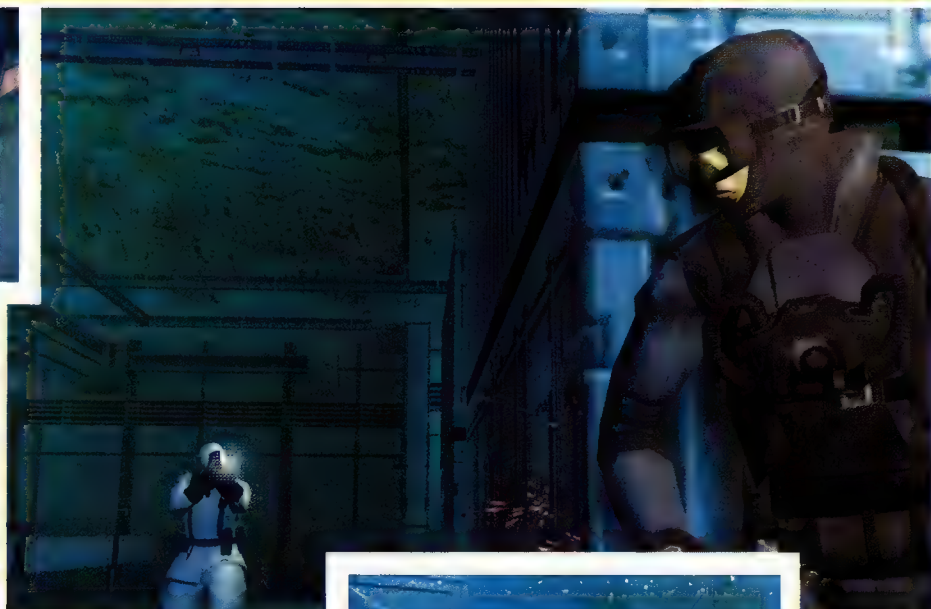


Sure, her reverse-misogynist attitude is initially grating. But once she takes a couple slugs to the hammocks, she cools right down and falls for Snake's gruff charms. Whether she lives or dies is up to you. If you haven't yet experienced the joy of *MGS*, all we can say is, "Don't give

CYBORG NINJA



The Ninja is the classic videogame nutcase, if by "classic nutcase" you mean "metallic stealth-cloak-wearing former ally with a massive attitude problem and balls of steel." Late in the game, Ninja shows us the good in all men and eats a giant steel foot for dinner, squishing with the best of them.



changes, but we are changing some things that were not well received back in 1998." No specifics on exactly what those things are, but we do know that the voiceovers are all being redone in English (with a more fully realized script), with no Japanese voice recorded at all this time around.

Although Kojima doesn't know whether there will be enough time to add VR missions before the game's fall 2003 release, he did admit the temptation to redraw the Codec conversations in 3D. "Initially, we thought of using polygon models," he said, "but we then thought that illustrations have their own neatness. We're going with illustrations."

So, for GameCube owners everywhere, *The Twin Snakes* looks like another feather to stick in your exclusive cap. And if you somehow missed playing the original, Snake's looking better than ever. **IC**



The Twin Snakes integrates all the gameplay elements of *MGS2* into the original *MGS* framework, allowing gamers to shoot in first-person mode, drag tranquilized guards into lockers, and much more.

GC



KOJIMA ON THE ORIGIN OF THE TWIN SNAKES

"NINTENDO APPROACHED US AND SAID, 'HOW ABOUT MGS FOR THE GAMECUBE?' WE ACCEPTED THE OFFER."



PSYCHO MANTIS

If the thought of someone reading your diary, going through your drawers, looking in your medicine cabinet, or checking your pants pockets creeps you out, have someone else play the Psycho Mantis part of the game, where he analyzes your progress up to that point and reads your Memory Cards.



SNIPER WOLF

If it wasn't for the fact that Sniper Wolf is sexy hot (for a videogame character), Snake might mind all the sniping he endures from her mid-game. When she's not hotly sniping Meryl, she's hotly sniping Snake, and Otacon has the hots for her cuz she likes to unzip her jacket real low in subzero weather.



NAOMI HUNTER

Naomi isn't quite what she seems—which is to say, she's the chief of FOX-HOUND's medical staff, offering advice on the game's bosses. When she's not giving Snake a hard time—which is almost always—she's got something up her sleeve. Doesn't



SOLID SNAKE

We like a guy who talks tough, smokes, hits on the dames, and shoots naughty boys—mostly because we won't—and Solid Snake fits the bill. Is he a hopeless womanizer or candy-coated softy with a heart of gold? Only Meryl Silverburgh knows, and she ain't





SUN MICROSYSTEM

WITH KOJIMA GOING HANDHELD WITH BOKTAI, THE FUTURE LOOKS BRIGHT

➔ Take what you know about Hideo Kojima's game design portfolio, throw open the window, and allow us to illuminate something entirely different. The mastermind behind Konami's critically acclaimed *Metal Gear Solid* and *Zone of the Enders* series has something new in the works; only this time, he's setting his sights a whole lot smaller.

While the latest exploits of Solid Snake made their fair share of thunder at this year's E3, Konami's *Boktai: The Sun Is In Your Hand*—an action RPG for GBA that utilizes a

solar sensor built into each cartridge—should light up more than a few faces. After all, it is coming from one of the most revered creators in the business. It's a big departure from the paranoid techno-thrillers that have defined his career, to be sure, but *GMR*'s hands-on time with *Boktai* left us with no doubt that this is a Hideo Kojima game through and through.

As Kojima himself tells it, he's been batting a couple different game ideas around in his head for several years. These included creating one with the "live feel that only a

handheld game system can deliver," one "in which you fight vampires with sunlight," and finally, "a game that comes with a solar sensor." Confluence ensued when Konami's Japanese toy and hobby division released a series of inexpensive games equipped with sensors for smell, humidity, and other factors. With the necessary technology in reach, *Boktai* began to see the light of day.

With an existing light sensor in hand, Kojima took the next steps, first collaborating with Konami's amusement (arcade) division. "I first asked them to create a prototype,

THE GUN DEL SOL: CHOOSE YOUR MODEL

Several variations on Django's Gun Del Sol will be available. One releases a rapid-fire shot of light and another projects a fiery cone. Further upgrading enables this second weapon to be swung around in a wide arc—at the expense of quite a bit of solar energy. Says Kojima, "Your solar gun's lens increases in level as you use it. The player decides which lens to strengthen and how to customize the gun."

Those of you who actually have things to do during the hours the sun is up (like, say, school or work) need not fear, as recharging stations dot the landscape. Don't rely on these too often, however, as Django is limited to a maximum of five uses per station, and they will be few and far between. Says Kojima, "Obviously, there will be differences in gameplay depending on what kind of weather you get. But what is fun about this game is tackling such situations and coming up with your own way of playing." ☛



Besides catching a few rays, *Boktai* provides players with an additional impetus for leaving the house once in a while. Says Kojima: "You can also engage in link battles with other players using the Django you have nurtured. There are a bunch of elements that allow you to play over and over again."

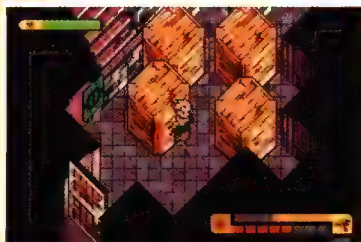


and I took that to Nintendo. Thanks to the cooperation of [its] staff, a special board was developed." Nintendo must have been impressed, as the company was happy to work with Kojima and Konami on costs.

Players control Django, who must travel through the land, battling vampires, with the power of the sun on his side. According to Kojima, *Boktai* is an "action RPG, and not a command-based RPG"—which means combat comes frequently and is far more tactile than the standard drop-down menu RPG interface.

Obviously, the core gameplay is based around accessing the sun. Players need to frequently charge up Django's weapon of choice—the Gun Del Sol. Pushing the Charge button thrusts the gun skyward. Naturally, the sunnier it is, the faster the recharge time: By our estimates, charging in broad daylight takes approximately five seconds, cloudier conditions will take...a while...longer.

Given Kojima's legendary attention to minutiae, it comes as no surprise that *Boktai* is rife with details like these. For example, when it's sunny outside, it's sunny in the game world, with shadow-



casting sunlight shining through the windowpanes and treasure chests packed with nourishing foodstuffs. If it's cloudy or dark, not-so-nourishing zombies clamber from out of the earth.

Boktai is already shaping up to be a beautiful game with crisp graphics and textures and detailed animations. In fact, it looks more like an early Sega Saturn or



PlayStation game, rather than, say, something for SNES. Controlling Django is smooth and easy, and the sound effects are excellent. Tellingly, this game looks good on a TV screen, but even sharper on the GBA—after all, in order to beat this game, you're going to have to go outside. And Hideko Kojima wouldn't have it any other way. ☛

3 EASY STEPS TO SLAYING VAMPIRES FOR FUN & PROFIT

Django must seek out boss vampire coffins, usually located in the depths of some dungeon. This coffin must then be dragged to the closest Piledriver, a circular clearing bathed in light and ringed by solar pillars; only at these spots can vampires be defeated. Even here, the sun's strength dictates each boss' difficulty. In broad daylight, we were able to beat some bosses in less than half a minute—indoors, however, the Gun Del Sol charges slowly, and we had more of a fight on our hands. Says Kojima, "Yes, if the weather is bad, boss battles will be tougher. We will make some adjustments for such regions. However, it is the moving around of the player that varies the content and difficulty level of the game. We don't want to 'interfere' too much and ruin this fun." ☛

GBA



HIDEKO KOJIMA ON ILLUMINATION

"I HAVE LEARNED A LOT FROM MOVIES AND MANGA. I WOULD LIKE TO TEACH AND GIVE THROUGH MY GAMES. THIS IS MY STYLE...."





I FEEL VINE

WELCOME TO THE JUNGLE. SOLID SNAKE RAISES THE STAKES OUTDOORS IN METAL GEAR SOLID 3

HIDEO'S HAT-TRICK
Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater

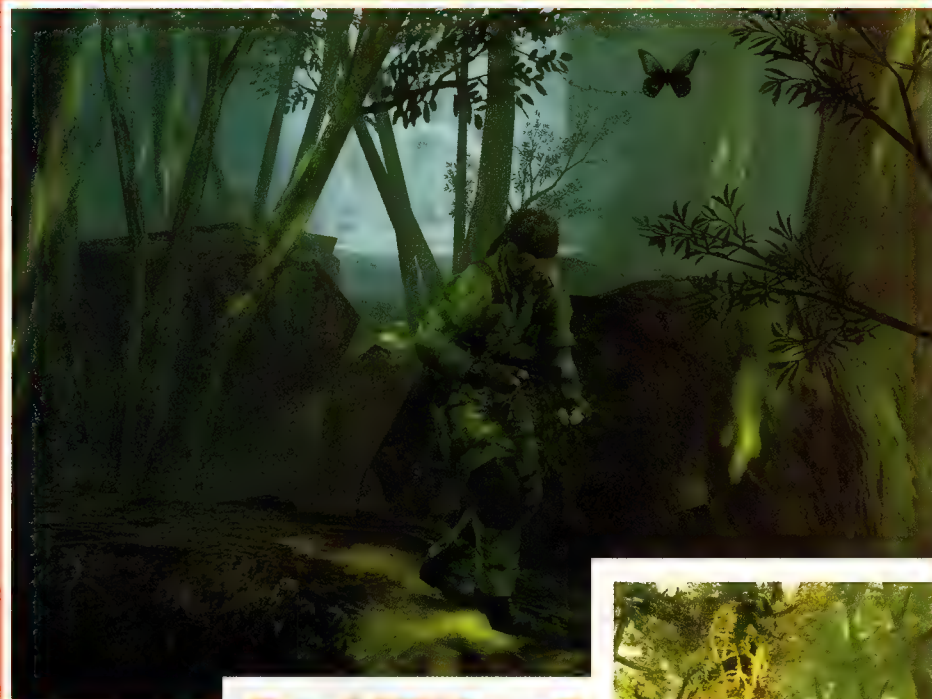
➔ "My staff is playing online games (Counter-Strike, for example) every day. I can't join them because I get 3D sickness. It's unfortunate," confides Hideo Kojima. Unfortunate for him, perhaps, but not for the rest of the gaming world. Imagine if the man behind the Metal Gear games were to spend two or three hours every day jumping around Counter-Strike's notorious Italy map, instead of, say, working on his games? That would be a nightmare. Especially when his current game happens to be Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater.

If Kojima-san had handed us these screens and told us they were running on a prototype of the PlayStation 3 hardware, we would have bought it hook, line, and sinker. Yeah, you can still sniff out some obvious polygons here and there, but consider this: The past couple Metal Gear games took place mostly indoors, with a primarily gray color scheme and environments that were, for the most part, grid based.

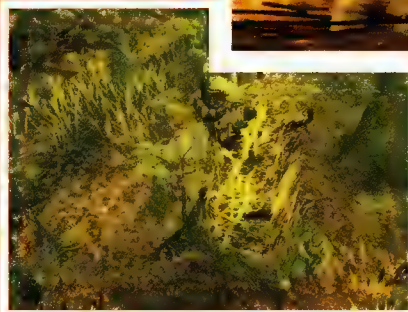
MGS3 looks to change all that by placing our hero outdoors, in the woods—and unless you've been living in a warehouse all your life, it's probably pretty obvious how big a difference this is. No longer will gamers see a guard at the other end of a hallway and then duck behind the cover of a wall until he walks away. Now, they'll have to contend with the organic designs of Mother Nature—for example, randomly placed trees, inconvenient outcroppings of rock, pokey shrubbery, babbling brooks, and—gasp!—snapping twigs. But more on that later. Why, after years of perpetual grayness, did Kojima finally decide to take the series camping?

"What do gamers around the world and MGS fans want?" he asks. "The answer is field battle—in the jungle. This much, I knew. I'm sure game developers all over the world are pursuing such environments and gameplay. However, expressing jungles in real-time is not easy even with the PS2 and other consoles. And given that MGS is an action game, I delivered settings in closed, man-made environments [because the same models and texture can be used repeatedly, and collision problems can be avoided with flat surfaces] while being aware of what fans wanted. I wanted to overcome all of this with MGS3. A true jungle, graphics-wise and gameplay-wise—I'm sure fans will enjoy it."

Truer words have never been spoken, but how on earth is his team

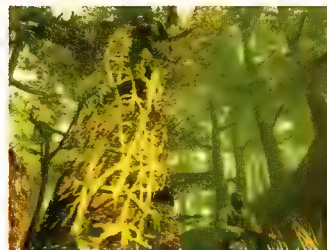


"So, what about rations," you ask? Check this out: In MGS: Snake Eater, you refill your health and improve your overall condition by foraging for sustenance in the woods. Which, basically means you'll be eating bugs and bark (and God knows what else) instead of the usual stuff. Num cum!



KOJIMA ON METAL GEAR ONLINE

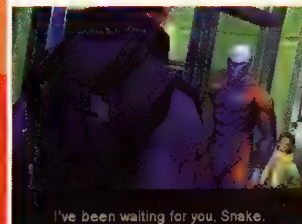
"WE CREATED A TOTALLY NEW ENGINE (FOR MGS3). WITH GAMES LIKE METAL GEAR ONLINE IN THE FUTURE, IT WAS THE RIGHT DECISION TO DO SO."



no. 2 TOP FIVE METAL GEAR MOMENTS

SNAKE BATTLES THE NINJA (MGS)

Even in a series full of memorable battles (MGS's rooftop helicopter fight, MGS2's multiple Metal Gear Ray onslaught, etc.), the first time you face off against the Ninja stands out. His stealth-camouflage invisibility effect, the guttural (moans he taunts you with ["Hurt me more"]), his sword reflecting bullets into exploding computers, and papers flying everywhere as he flips and cartwheels about—it's like a great action movie with you behind the controller.



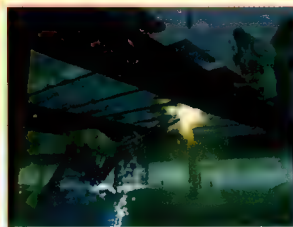
I've been waiting for you, Snake.

↳ creating such processor-intensive graphics? After all, the geometry involved in rendering an entire forest, complete with roving patrols of soldiers and one particular mulleted protagonist, must surely take considerable computational oomph. Is this a modification of the *Zone of the Enders: The 2nd Runner* engine, which in itself is an upgraded *MGS2* engine? Not so, says Kojima. "We've reached our limit, technically, with *MGS2*. We knew we couldn't get more out of the *MGS2* engine for *MGS3*. That's why we created a totally new engine. With games like *MGO* (*Metal Gear Online*) in the future, it was the right decision to do so."

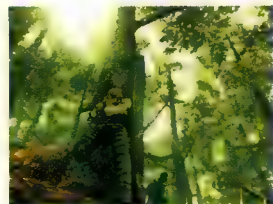
The pulse-quickenning *Metal Gear Online* revelation aside, the outdoor environments spell big changes in the stealth-gaming mentality. "One big difference is that there are no flat [surfaces] in the jungle. This is what makes development very difficult technically. But this is what makes you experience differences in heights within the game. There will be moments during the game when you will get lost in the jungle."

As you can see in many of these screens, hiding in plain sight is a new game mechanic that will surely raise tension levels to new heights. If you thought creeping up on someone in pitch-black darkness as Sam Fisher (à la *Splinter Cell*) was tense, imagine standing right there in full daylight, with only a layer of greasepaint separating you and your prey before you insert a survival knife in his jugular. Kojima tells us, "Yes, this is a new gameplay mechanic. One of the game concepts of *MGS3* is camouflage. By wearing the right camouflage in given environments and backgrounds, Snake's 'stealth index' increases. You can also paint your face and body."

Ah, "but is this truly Snake?" we wondered aloud? After all, Solid Snake was a rookie in his first adventure to Outer Heaven on NES, and the equipment "Snake" is wearing in the screenshots is vintage Vietnam. Now, unless our pal Snake is bored with all the high-tech crap Otakon's been sticking him with and wanted to go "back to basics," chances are that this isn't Snake. As we all saw with *Sons of Liberty*, Kojima and company aren't averse to messing with our minds. That said, with retro equipment and a lush and jungly setting, *GMR* suspects that *Snake Eater* is a prequel to the original *Metal Gear*. Kojima-san, via Codec, would only tell us, "That's a secret."



MGS3 features a lot of shooting (just look at that damn grass!), in both first- and third-person modes. But the biggest new game mechanic is hiding in plain sight (bottom) before stabbing someone in the teeth. Gannhhhh! That's freaking us out right now.



As you would expect in a game set outside (with 360 degrees of trouble surrounding you), sound will play a big role. "When we started developing *MGS3*, Mr. Mori [our military advisor] gave us field training. It was very real. What we learned in the training will be implemented in the game. We do plan to use 5.1 channel sound. Already, the gameplay feel gives us the sense of presence just like real field training.

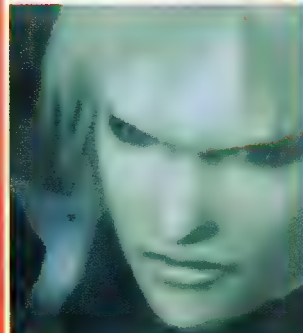
Things are so real this time."

Graphics, sound, new gameplay techniques, and a conspiracy theory in place, and the game's not even done yet. So when is *Metal Gear Solid 3: Snake Eater* going to arrive? According to Kojima-san, the game will be done and ready to ship in "2004." Stealth-gaming fanatics had better get ready to learn their tricks all over again. This ain't your daddy's Snake. ☛

no. 1 TOP FIVE METAL GEAR MOMENTS

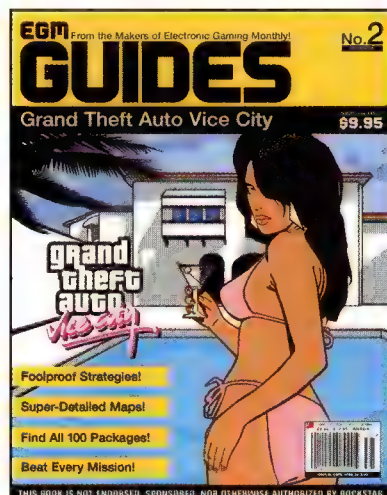
ENTER RAIDEN (*MGS2*)

Whether you love him or hate him (maybe we should say whether you hate him or really hate him), you have to respect what Raiden represents. By introducing the blond rookie agent as *MGS2*'s main playable character, instead of series mainstay Solid Snake, Kojima defied expectations, completely surprised fans, and took a huge risk all at once. How many other popular sequels can you say even one of those things about?



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HANDS-ON!

WE'VE PLAYED...
Beyond Good & Evil

WHEN PIGS FLY

RAYMAN'S POPPA GIVES GMR A LOOK AT HIS LABOR OF LOVE, FOUR YEARS IN THE MAKING—BEYOND GOOD & EVIL

WE'VE PLAYED

Beyond Good & Evil

HANDS-ON!



“Hi, maw, wish yew were hayuri!” says Pey’j in his distinct Galloway drawl in this scene, postcard-worthy shot on Hyllis. Why, precisely, Jade doesn’t speak like she’s from Texas while her “uncle” Pey’j does eludes us at this moment, but that’s OK. Pigs are people, too.

“I THINK FRENCH PEOPLE PREFER PIGS IN THEIR SAUSAGES TO PIGS IN THEIR BEDROOM.” —MICHEL ANCEL ON UH, PORK PRODUCTS

➔ The French—they are, how you say, eccentric. The country, among whose noble contributions to world culture include Marie Antoinette, Napoleon, Serge Gainsbourg, the Tour de France, bleu cheese, and Luc Besson, has always produced work of a different flavor than, say, Italy and other neighboring nations. What is it about France that gives its food, music, and games such a unique style? What is it about France that conjures up a limbless hero like Rayman in a world where derivative animal mascots typically rule the day? Having first appeared back in 1995 in 2D form, *Rayman* surprised many by being both stylish and accomplished in a hotly competitive genre ruled by *Sonic* and *Mario*. When he returned in 1999, in 3D and on N64 (as *Rayman 2*), the quality of the gameplay and graphics astonished nearly everyone who

played it. And so the hard work done by *Rayman* creator Michel Ancel and his development team was rewarded by critical praise and commercial success. But with the recent resurgence of *Rayman* (à la *Rayman 3*) left in the hands of another team, what has Ancel and crew been up to? Working on *Beyond Good & Evil* is what. First revealed at last year’s E3 convention, Ubi Soft’s newest franchise caught the eyes of many industry insiders with its stunning, otherworldly visuals and intriguing dual-character gameplay. The fact that this was Ancel’s new labor of love gave it added credibility, putting the game on many editor’s most-wanted lists. Well, *GMR*, in an exclusive hands-on playtest, is here to open a window to the world called *Beyond Good & Evil*. Over the next few pages we explore *BG&E*’s gameplay mechanics, devour the story line, and talk with

Ancel, the game’s creator.

THE WHOLE TRUTH

BG&E’s heroine is a young woman who goes by the name of Jade. At her side is Pey’j (pronounced “page”), and together, these two friends must try and get to the bottom of a sinister plot involving aliens that have been attacking her home world of Hyllis, and the mysterious government forces that have been “protecting” the planet. When a rebel organization known as SPOON makes contact with her, Jade soon discovers how deep the seeds of deception really lie. And so, with Pey’j’s help, Jade embarks on her journey.

IN THE BEGINNING

As any artist would contend, the urge to follow his or her creative muse (and not recycle ➔

XB

PC

PS2

GBA

GC



← As you can tell from these screenshots, the world of Hyllis is gorgeous, aquatic in nature, and wonderfully realized. If you ever get lost, you can switch into first-person view, and the name of each city will show up on your compass when you point in its direction.



WHO THE HELL IS MICHEL ANCEL?

→ Ubi Soft's most high-profile game designer is, for lack of a better comparison, the French Miyamoto. While he might not have quite the same résumé under his belt as Nintendo's guy, Ancel's games have shown an impressive understanding of solid game mechanics, innovation, and aesthetics. So how much freedom does he have creating games like *BG&E*?

"Basically, we have complete creative freedom," he explains, "although we make sure that every idea makes sense and fits well in terms of the overall scope of our projects. Most discussions about changes to our games concern possible improvements rather than new ideas—it's very helpful to have additional perspective as the game approaches completion, and we're continuing to make quality tweaks based on the feedback we get." **TE**



→ past glories) is a strong one. When we asked Ancel to explain why he left *Rayman 3* in the hands of another team so he could work on *BG&E*, he said, "Every developer wants to have his own big project, the game he wants to play but which doesn't exist. I've wanted to create a huge adventure game since 1989—*Rayman*, in fact, began as a major action-adventure project. We planned to release it on the SNES CD-ROM, but that never happened. It was decided that since *Rayman* was to be released quite quickly on the PS1, we would hold back the action elements and create a pure platform game instead. Now, eight years later, with the same core team and lots more

experience, we've returned to my original dream with *Beyond Good & Evil*."

GIRLFRIEND

Jade isn't your typical towering, ridiculously proportioned breastfest with an unlimited arsenal like many other modern videogame heroines. She's a regular young woman with a waify crop of hair and a slight but athletic figure. Jade's design suggests the development team was conscious of who it was designing. Ancel tells us, "We wanted Jade to be a real character—more a human being than a male fantasy object, which is not as easy as you might think. Keeping that goal in mind, we tried to imagine how she

would react in certain situations and what elements of human feeling she could bring to the game."

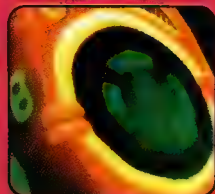
Armed with only a camera [see S-A-C sidebar, below], a Dai-jo combat stick, and her wits, Jade travels all around the world of Hyllis solving environment-based puzzles (often relying on the cooperation of Pey'j to progress), documenting the local wildlife for cash, and interacting with her anthropomorphic friends, like the Rastafarian rhinos who help her upgrade her hovercraft.

While many action-adventure games attempt to be all things to all gamers (*Midway's Haven* being a good example), *BG&E's* diversity never feels tacked on.

S-A-C = SYNTHETICAL ATOMIC COMPRESSOR

→ During her adventures, Jade has a lot of stuff to carry around. Luckily, she has her handy interdimensional S-A-C at her side. It's essentially a space-time-warpy thing that

S-A-C



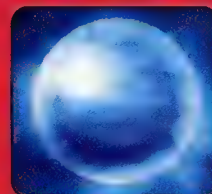
→ Jade doesn't exactly keep her S-A-C within her S-A-C, but we thought it might be helpful to show you what it looks like. Strapped to her waist, this special satchel is unobtrusive and stylish at the same time. How cosmopolitan!

VP-H263



→ One of Jade's key items is her VP-H263 15.8 megapixel camera. With it, she attempts to document every living creature in the world. The Science Center pays her cash for each shot of every unique creature she finds.

PEARLS



→ Another form of currency in the game are the special pearls you find after beating bosses and meeting certain objectives. Jade uses pearls to buy parts for her hovercraft at the Rasta rhino's shop. Dey only take pearls, mon.



Other games have tried to merge multiple styles of gameplay (vehicular combat, platform elements, etc.) with mixed results. In *BG&E*, everything is in its proper place—like hovercraft serving as a mode of transport to other cities—giving the game a nicely cohesive feel.

"WE'RE STILL INFLUENCED BY RAYMAN, EVEN THOUGH HE'S FAR AWAY THESE DAYS." -MICHEL ANCEL TEARFULLY REMINISCING

The game places a strong focus on the action, keeping Jade (and Pey'j) opening gateways, fighting exotic enemies, battling sea serpents with their hovercraft, and snapping pictures all the while. Puzzle solving is never overly complicated, usually requiring the two characters to stand on a switch, or for Jade to climb a narrow gap to turn a wheel. The story line serves as the propulsion needed to move Jade from one beautiful area to another. With elements of H.R. Giger; *The City of Lost Children*; *The Fifth Element*; and, as Ancel tells us, Hayao Miyazaki present, *BG&E* is fantastically stylish. Clearly this energetic, wide-screen marriage of storytelling and

gameplay was no accident. "We wanted to create a game rhythm similar to that of a movie," Ancel says, "something that really engages players and delights them in diverse ways. For instance, the hovercraft provides a cool way to explore and to fight, so it delivers a number of different experiences. We also tried to avoid the level-to-level effect, which is why we worked so hard to combine the story and the different styles of gameplay smoothly. Instead of a five-games-in-one experience, I think we've created a unified, global one."

TECHNICAL

Since this is the same person who

brought us *Rayman*, you'd be correct in noting that many of *BG&E*'s aesthetics look similar to Ancel's previous works. But it's actually running on a completely new technology he refers to as the Jade engine. Does this mean we'll see more of Jade and company in the future? Ancel confides, "The *Beyond Good & Evil* story is definitely not finished at the end of the first game. We've worked incredibly hard on this world, and I'd like to present the second episode as soon as possible. Add to that a ton of new gameplay ideas inspired by the game system, and you've got two excellent reasons for a sequel. Of course, the success of the game will be a key element in any sequel decisions." **IC**

COCHON

So what is it with the French and pork?



Maybe it's a subliminal thing, but when we first saw Jade's porcine pal, Pey'j, erupt onscreen to rescue her from the clutches of a slimy tentacle creature at the beginning of *Beyond Good & Evil*, we instantly thought of the animated pig lamp from the French movie *Amelie*. We asked game director Michel Ancel, "What is it with the French and pigs?" He told us, "I think French people prefer pigs in their sausages to pigs in their bedroom. But, as you imply, it's cool to transform a traditional concept—a barnyard animal—into a surprising idea."

"I like the idea of pronounced contrasts—Jade and Pey'j are a bit like beauty and the beast, two opposite characters who manage to come together, despite superficial circumstances that might make their relationship seem unlikely. The hybrid creatures in the game provide another way to create surprise and add the fantasy touch that our team really likes." **IC**

lets Jade digitize and transport any item (which then stores compactly in her bag) for easy retrieval at any time. So, what's inside her bag of tricks?

CREDIT CARD



→ This is Jade's credit card, which is what holds all of the units (Hyllis' form of currency) she earns from the Science Center. Jade uses this cash to purchase, among other things, yummy yummy starkos and K-bups.

STARKOS



→ Starkos are a source of sustenance Jade uses to keep her health up. Getting beat on by a boss? Snack on a starkos for a substantially more potent K-Bup! and watch your life meter fill up.

HOVERCRAFT



→ Jade's hovercraft, though not something she keeps stored in her S-A-C, is still crucial to her success. The craft, which is usually used for transportation, also helps her access areas where rare wildlife live. Photo!

XB

PC

PS2

GBA

GC

NOW

REVIEWS YOU CAN TRUST



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HOW WE RATE

YOUR GUIDE TO THE GMR SCORING SYSTEM

1 KIMCHI CORO 2 LIMITED 3 BONUS 4 RATED 5 AVERAGE 6 GOOD 7 RECOMMENDED 8 EXCELLENT 9 MUST HAVE 10 TIMELESS CLASSIC

WARNING!! WHERE MULTIPLE VERSIONS OF A GAME ARE REVIEWED, GMR WILL MENTION DIFFERENCES ONLY IF THEY SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECT THE GAMEPLAY



RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN: TIDES OF WAR

WE HAVE WAYS OF MAKING YOU PLAY

MATURE | XBOX [REVIEWED] | PC

PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
DEVELOPER: NERVE SOFTWARE
PRICE: \$49.99
RELEASE: AVAILABLE NOW
PLAYERS: 1-2 (1-16 ONLINE)
ORIGIN: U.S.A.



The original PC version of *Return to Castle Wolfenstein* is a nice slab of FPS comfort food. While other shooters experiment with storytelling, stealth gameplay, and vehicles, *RTCW* sticks to old-school run-and-gun gameplay. However, stapled onto its middle-of-the-road single-player campaign is a pretty spectacular

multiplayer mode that makes the overall package worth buying.

Nerve (the multiplayer developer) has made some improvements to the single-player game for the Xbox version of *RTCW: Tides Of War*. Besides adding a prologue mission (which gives more backstory to the goofy robo-zombie-Nazi story line), the most significant tweak in

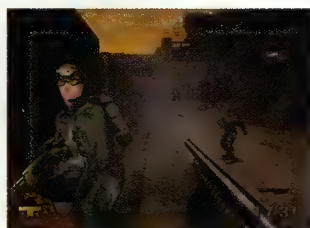
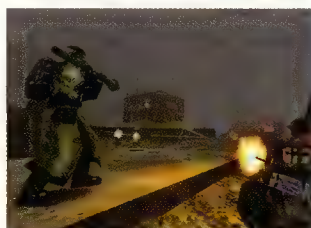
TOW is the addition of bonuses for finding secrets. In the PC version, all the game does is acknowledge that you've found a secret, so discovering a hidden health pack or more ammo is nifty, but finding bars of Nazi gold has no benefit at all (outside the conceptual benefit of knowing you're robbing a bunch of Nazi tools). For the Xbox version, Nerve has

XB

PC



← In the original *Castle Wolfenstein*, you end up shooting a lot of Nazi dogs. *RTCW: TOW* ups the ante by having the Nazis create weird robo-dogs with gatling guns on their back (as if zombies weren't enough). Thankfully, like any ill-begotten Nazi invention, filling these robo-dogs up with bullets usually gets rid of them fast-like.



made the significant tweak of rewarding you with extra armor, health, and ammo after you find all the secrets. It sounds minor on paper, but when you take the time to find all those trinkets, that health/armor/ammo boost could mean the difference between another dead Nazi or a frustratingly dead you. Also, if you stab an enemy in the back, you're now rewarded with extra items, making stealthy attacks a little more enticing.

There are also some new items, including the Holy Cross, the shotgun, the EMP device, and the X-Shield. The Holy Cross—used to instantly kill zombies—feels unnecessary, since the zombies are rarely a problem in the first

place. But everything else is pretty damn useful; the shotgun is a welcome FPS staple, the EMP device is good for those new X-Shepherds (cyberdogs with miniguns), and the X-Shield is an awesome aid for fighting gun-toting robo-Nazis. Alas, these are tweaks, not major changes. Gameplay is still mostly run, shoot, find keys/switches, and shoot more. For PC veterans, the single-player is a bit better, but it's still old-school comfort food.

The best part of *TOW* is the chance to start killing Nazis with your buddy, and getting on Xbox Live to take out chumps dumb enough to choose the Axis team in multiplayer. Two-player co-op is decent

fun, and it makes the single-player campaign a lot more manageable and enjoyable, but the real meat of the game is the XBL multiplayer.

If you don't have Xbox Live (or friends), then *TOW* is an OK distraction at best. But if you're able to shoot up Nazis on XBL, or at least play co-op with a buddy, *TOW* is a rip-roarin' Nazi-shootin' good time. **B+**

—Thierry Nguyen

GMR

UPSTANDING
8/10

BETTER THAN: RETURN TO WOLFENSTEIN (ON PC)
NOT AS GOOD AS: HALO
WAIT FOR IT: BRUTE FORCE

2ND. OPINION

Although I love *Halo* as much as the next guy, I don't necessarily need arching story lines and breathtaking narrative every time I play an FPS. As an action-based shooter, *Wolfenstein* works well, especially online. Motion-sickness, however, kicked in after 10 minutes of roaming. **B+**

—James Mearns

XB

PC



SHADOWBANE

TIME WELL SPENT

TEEN | PC

Besides being a real mouthful to categorize, massively multiplayer online role-playing games all suck during their first few weeks of operation. *Shadowbane* is no exception. For a while in the early days, just after release, the billing system was more or less nonoperational and the main game executable was a crash-prone mess. If you logged in anytime other than 5 a.m., lag made the game unplayable, which, surprisingly, wasn't as big a problem as it sounds, since the login servers were so broken that you'd generally never make it to the unplayable game anyway.

Because MMORPGs are as much about ongoing service as actual gameplay, it's to developer Wolfpack Studios' credit that virtually all of the major technical problems were fixed within a couple weeks.

At first, *Shadowbane* seems pretty much like every other online fantasy RPG, albeit one with slightly less-than-cutting-edge visuals. Although the now familiar monster-killing/equipment-collecting level treadmill is in place, a few little innovations have crept in. Chief among them is this simple but brilliant idea: Instead of receiving an experience penalty for grouping, players in a group all get full experience for any monsters they kill. This one small change to the formula makes people eager to form groups, and it actually creates a more social environment—what these games

are theoretically supposed to be about in the first place. It also means you'll tear through levels at a dizzying speed.

Luckily, *Shadowbane* includes a complex high-level game. Not only is there an intricate guild interface (for instance, guilds have governing boards and multiple voting options, and can become vassals of more powerful guilds), but there's also a town-building system whereby a guild can actually plan, construct, and maintain its own fortress city. These cities contain walls, player-owned houses, NPC hirelings, and guild-run shops, all of which can be upgraded over time. Guilds can declare war on one another and then lay siege to and ultimately destroy each other's cities. So once you've reached the level cap [currently level 60], there's still plenty left to do. Theoretically. As of this writing, no guilds have managed to reach the level at which they can purchase the equipment needed for a proper siege. Still, *Shadowbane* has the most ambitious plan for post-treadmill play of any MMORPG released to date. **E Eric Wolpaw**

FOR: UBI SOFT
DEV: WOLFPACK STUDIOS
RE: AVAILABLE NOW

PRICE: \$39.99
PLAYERS: UNLIMITED
ORIGIN: U.S.A.

GMR 8/10

BETTER THAN: EVERQUEST
NOT AS GOOD AS: ASHERON'S CALL 2
WAIT FOR IT: STAR WARS GALAXIES



ARC THE LAD: TOTS

NOT QUITE THE SAME OLD LAD

TEEN | PS2

Less than a year after the release of Working Designs' RPG anthology *Arc the Lad Collection* comes an all-new PS2 sequel, but it may not be the second coming fans are expecting. *Arc the Lad: Twilight of the Spirits* is an overly generic fantasy romp featuring what is quickly becoming *The Japanese RPG Story*.

Arc the Lad has two alternating story lines, each only tangentially related to the previous games' story (but hey—you've already played both of them). One Thousand Years after the events of the original, twin youths Kharg and Darc set out with an Unlikely Rag-Tag Group of Heroes to Protect a Mysterious Woman and destroy the Evil Empire, whose members are collecting the Five Elemental Crystals from the Ruins of an Ancient Civilization to gain the Ultimate Power. So, if we already know exactly what's going to happen, the gameplay should be great and we'll want to play through it again, right? Sadly, that is not the case.

While technically a strategy RPG, *TOTS* is simultaneously the lightest of both strategy and role-playing games, so it won't please either

camp. The predictable gameplay is overburdened with boring fetch quests, drawing out an already overlong feeling of déjà vu. There's nothing terrible here, but no other part of the game makes up for the extreme "been here, done this" feeling—the gameplay systems are thin and unengaging, the graphics are bland (if well executed), and the music is just above average.

This game has been made before, and it has been made better. If you're looking for a role-playing game to tide you over until the fall (*FFX-2*, anyone?) or you're a fan of the series, you may want to give *Arc the Lad: Twilight of the Spirits* a look, but everyone else is advised to pass. **Michael Vreeland**

PS2
PRICE: \$39.99
PLAYERS: 1
ORIGIN: JAPAN

GMR 5/10

BETTER THAN: RHAPSODY
NOT AS GOOD AS: ARC THE LAD COLLECTION
WAIT FOR IT: FINAL FANTASY X-2





UNLIMITED SAGA

LIMITED. VERY LIMITED

TEEN | PS2

➔ Even if you love RPGs, be wary of *Unlimited SaGa*. The game has a decent battle system that's customizable and flexible, allowing you to develop whichever skill you prefer. But having every move consume HP is somewhat unbalancing when enemies already do so much damage, and the reworked HP/LP setup can be bafflingly random. When you factor in the bizarrely unintuitive interface (always a buzzkill in RPGs) and the consistent lag in the omnipresent Reel system, capriciousness becomes a running theme.

Some readers will see the 2D graphics and pledge their automatic support, but they may want to think again. *Unlimited SaGa* doesn't have good graphics, it has good art—there's a difference. If it had good graphics, character portraits would have more than one facial expression, battle sprites would have more than three frames of animation and would look good no matter how zoomed out they are, and players would get something more than a static game piece to move around the shockingly unrealized

environments. It feels like playing a text adventure with random battles on a *Candy Land* board.

There's nothing wrong with text adventures, but *Unlimited SaGa* fails on that level, too, offering only tedious clichés in place of interesting narrative. Even the few clever scenarios quickly turn into rote formulas: Scamming customers with Ruby is fun, but in no time, she's dragged into a boring quest to save the world. Even worse, every character plays the same way.

So much could have gone right with this game, but its muddled executions of dubious concepts at every turn mean the only way to avoid heartbreak is to walk on by. **C-**

Nich Maragos

PUB SQUARE ENIX PRICE \$49.99
DEV SQUARESOFT PLAYERS 1
REL JULY 2003 ORIGIN JAPAN

GMR MISFIRE 3/10

BETTER THAN: METAL DUNGEON
NOT AS GOOD AS: DARK CLOUD 2
WAIT FOR IT: DISAGE: THE HOUR OF DARKNESS

X2: WOLVERINE'S REVENGE

CLAWLESS

TEEN | XBOX (REVIEWED) | PS2

➔ The easiest way to describe *Wolverine's Revenge* is to call it a wasted license. The graphics are superb, the story line is compelling, and Mark "Luke Skywalker" Hamill does a fabulous job of voicing ol' Canucklehead. Unfortunately, playing it is only slightly more fun than swallowing a lawn mower.

The game retells the story of Wolverine's origin. After learning that he's been infected with a virus that will kill him in 48 hours, Wolverine heads up to Canada's Weapon X facilities to track down a serum. Along the way, he encounters and fights villains like Sabertooth, Juggernaut, Magneto, and Lady Deathstrike. Wolverine's mutant abilities are handled well. His healing factor kicks in when his claws are retracted, and he can sniff out hidden guards and sense buried landmines.

Unfortunately, Activision should

consider transferring the team that created this title to the division that made *Tenchu 3*, as they seem more interested in stealth gameplay than the straight-out action Wolverine deserves. Players can use the environment as a weapon by pressing a button when "Strike!" appears onscreen, leading to flashy combos and tanker trucks being used as battering rams. While this is an interesting idea, it's not executed well. Pressing the Attack button overrides all Strike opportunities, resulting in battles where Wolverine patiently circles his foes instead of unleashing his feral rage. It's not exactly satisfying for the living embodiment of hack-n-slash.

Gameplay mechanics aside, *Wolverine's Revenge* reveals its critical flaws the moment the player picks up the controller. Autotargeting only engages once an enemy has been hit, there are no sound effects for

Wolverine's punches and kicks, finishing moves are activated randomly, the camera was apparently borrowed from an episode of *COPS*, and it's possible to be shot through a wall. There are more cheap deaths in *Wolverine's Revenge* than in *Tomb Raider II*—falling off ledges, getting gunned down by helicopters, or being spotted by sentries all lead to the frustrating Game Over screen. Even Kitty Pride's nine lives wouldn't help her get through this. **C-**

Doug Trueman

PUB ACTIVISION PRICE \$49.99
DEV GENPOOL SOFTWARE PLAYERS 1
REL JUNE 2003 ORIGIN U.S.A.

GMR BAD KITTY 5/10

BETTER THAN: SUPERMAN 64
NOT AS GOOD AS: ACTIVISION'S SPIDER-MAN
WAIT FOR IT: THE INCREDIBLE HULK



REVIEWS YOU CAN TRUST

day of defeat → wakeboarding unleashed featuring shaun murray → postal 2

DAY OF DEFEAT

WE SHALL FIGHT ON THE INTERNET

TEEN | PC

Yes, we've complained about there being a glut of WWII-themed games on the market, especially for the PC. But it's hard not to appreciate a game with as much heart as *Day of Defeat*. Following the lead of *Counter-Strike*, which started off as a popular user-created *Half-Life* mod, *Day of Defeat* is a mod turned full-scale supported release from Valve (the original developers of *Half-Life*).

Set across the European battlefields of WWII, *Day of Defeat* pits American and German forces against each other in team-based infantry action. You play as one of a number of unique classes, each with its own weapons, loadouts, and other specific sets of statistics.

A lot of thought has gone into balancing the classes so that no single unit is more powerful than the others. Therefore, teamwork is essential. Get on a map that has a lot of people

playing together (yes, this is pretty much an online-only game) and you'll have a wild and woolly time.

Day of Defeat doesn't sport the latest cutting-edge graphics, but in a weird way, that may be the best thing going for it. The fact that the game is based on four-and-a-half-year-old technology means that gamers with low- to mid-range machines will enjoy it, too—granted they're playing over a broadband connection. *Day of Defeat* isn't the most powerful gun in the armory, but it is the most reliable. **Tom Price**

Tom Price

PUB: ACTIVISION	PRICE: \$29.99
DEV: VALVE SOFTWARE	PLAYERS: 2-32
REL: MAY 2003	ORIGIN: U.S.A.

GMR 8

BETTER THAN: WORLD WAR II ONLINE
NOT AS GOOD AS: BATTLEFIELD 1942
WAIT FOR IT: MEDAL OF HONOR: RISING SUN



WAKEBOARDING UNLEASHED

IF TONY HAWK COULD SWIM

TEEN | XBOX [REVIEWED] | PS2

Activision has gone above and beyond the call of duty with its new title, *Wakeboarding Unleashed*. Players are towed behind a racing boat at lightning speeds and can jump, flip, grind, spin, and smash their way to crazy scores, hidden secrets, and gaps. It's even possible to let go of the towrope, flip over a house, flag down the boat, and regrip the line. This alone makes the game almost infinitely replayable, as there are almost no limitations on where you can go. The boat's wake serves as a permanent ramp, so players can create insane combos even on quiet stretches.

An innovative co-op mode lets one

player drive while the other wakeboards, and there are specific two-player tricks and gaps to find and learn. The '02 series' multiplayer elements remain intact, while whacked-out minigames (like rescuing stranded farm animals) make for an experience that's both challenging and comical.

But the title's most remarkable feature is the towrope's physics. Whether you're taking in slack or using it to slingshot around massive lakes, the rope feels absolutely real and must be played to be believed. Flying behind the boat in a tweaked Krypt is something no gamer should miss. *Tony Hawk* fans should snap up this title now. **Doug Trueman**

PUB: ACTIVISION	PRICE: \$49.95
DEV: SHABA STUDIOS	PLAYERS: 1-2
REL: JUNE 2003	ORIGIN: U.S.A.

GMR 9

BETTER THAN: EVERY OTHER WATERSPORT TITLE
NOT AS GOOD AS: THPS 4, BUT ONLY BY A HAIR
WAIT FOR IT: 1080 WHITE STORM



POSTAL 2

RETURN TO SENDER. NOW

MATURE | PC

When a game is touted as the most controversial ever and it proudly wears an M rating on its sleeve like a bloody booger, you can be reasonably sure there isn't much of a game underneath the sleaze. *Postal 2*—which at least tries to be different in its mission structure—is meant to be rude and crude, but it's also meant to be funny. That can make up for a lack of gameplay if done right. But guess what? *Postal 2* isn't funny.

Sure, Gary Coleman running around with a machine gun is sort of funny, but only in that way washed-up child actors with kidney problems being exploited can be. Starting the game off by kicking your own dog isn't funny—it's just crass.

Including a coin-op arcade game called *Fag Hunter* in the game world is not only not funny, it's disgusting and hateful. Whoever's responsible for that little piece of shame should be run out of the industry. In the case of *Postal 2*, the joke is on the game buyer. **Tom Price**

PUB: WHIPPIAL INTERACTIVE	PRICE: \$49.99
DEV: RUNNING WITH SCISSORS	PLAYERS: 1
REL: APRIL 2003	ORIGIN: U.S.A.

GMR 0

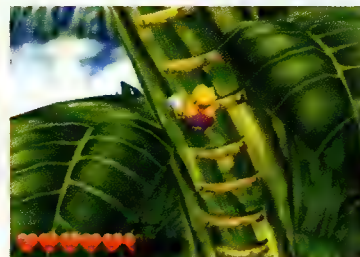
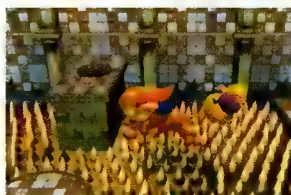
BETTER THAN: WORKING AT THE POST OFFICE
NOT AS GOOD AS: ANYTHING WE'VE EVER PLAYED
NOT EVEN: GARY COLEMAN CAN SALVAGE THIS ONE



XB

PC

PS2



→ There's quite a bit of variety of platforming in *Wario World*. The sticky orbs scattered throughout the levels allow Wario to grab on and jump to different areas. Level 4-1 (that big screen on the far left) hides Wario from view, except for strategically placed mirrors that aid navigation. And leave it to Treasure to keep us afraid of killer clowns.

WARIO WORLD

CLIMB AND PUNCH. NOT NECESSARILY IN THAT ORDER

EVERYONE | GC

PUBLISHER NINTENDO
DEVELOPER TREASURE
PRICE \$49.99
RELEASE JUNE 2003
PLAYERS 1
ORIGIN JAPAN

➔ For some strange reason, Nintendo hasn't talked about *Wario World* the way it does its other major releases. The company has mostly kept silent, almost as if it's hiding something, and only recently did it confirm rumors that Treasure is developing the game. It doesn't make much sense, because *Wario World* is nothing to be ashamed of—it's a fun, imaginative platformer that, though easily and quickly completed, is another solid first-party GameCube title.

The game is missing Wario's signature transformations, but Treasure still successfully captured the spirit of the Game Boy's *Wario Land* series with fast-paced platform jumping, simple-yet-fun

combat, and quirky design. In a nice change of pace for a Nintendo platformer, *Wario World* plays more like a 2D game with linear level goals than the free-roaming paradise that is *Mario Sunshine*. But it's also a problem, as *Wario World* is far too easy and far too short. There are just eight true levels, and while each is distinctly entertaining, none is especially lengthy or difficult. The same can be said for the eight boss battles; you might run out of hearts a few times, but it only costs 50 coins to continue, and with a bankroll in the thousands, you can easily swing it.

There is some added value, though. *Wario World* contains several bonus levels similar to Mario's FLUDD-less

adventures from *Sunshine*. You can also download *WarioWare, Inc.* trial games to your GBA. But the short length and repeat enemies keep *Wario World* from being a must-buy. If a sequel doubles the number of levels and increases the penalty for dying, then we'll talk. Until then, we'll just be content knowing Nintendo and Treasure remain a good match. **B+**

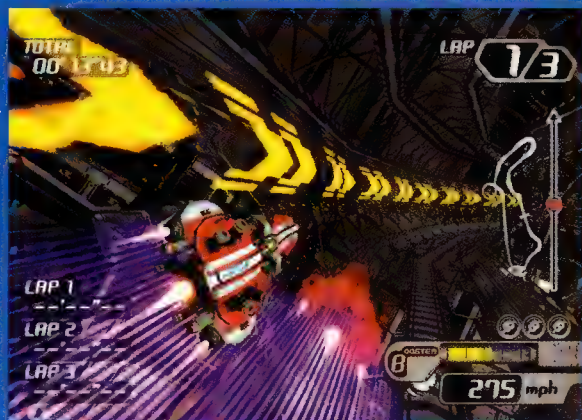
—Andrew Pfister

GMR 7/10
GROUCHY

NOT AS GOOD AS: MARIO SUNSHINE
ON PAR WITH: WARIO LAND 4
WAIT FOR IT: VIEWTIFUL JOE

2ND OPINION

GameCube owners will be very happy with *Wario World*. It looks great, is a lot of fun to play (beating the crap out of enemies never gets old), and has plenty of secrets for the advanced gamer. But the slippery control may frustrate some and the game is short. *WarioWare, Inc.* buyers get extra mileage out of this one, though. **B+**
—James Meike



TUBE SLIDER

NOT SO FAST, BUDDY

EVERYONE | GC

➔ It's easy to do a futuristic racer, but it's much harder to do one that hasn't been done before. And when the chief competition is *Wipeout* and *F-Zero* [irony alert: NDCube developed *F-Zero Maximum Velocity* for GBA], two franchises that represent the best of the best, you'd better bring something new to the table. Sadly, the best *Tube Slider* can come up with is a fancy-looking plate carrying a healthy portion of "been there, done that."

No doubt about it—the game looks amazing, thanks mostly to a rock-solid 60fps framerate that's consistent even in multiplayer. But once you get tired of how nice it looks, you'll notice how boring the underlying game is.

Part of this blandness is caused by racing that's limited to tubes. There are no obstacles to avoid, no jumps to negotiate—and there's no danger of falling off the course. Nor is it a combat-racing game: You can siphon energy away from opponents, but you usually aren't close enough for it to make any difference. So you're just flying down pretty tubes, trying to determine which part of the track is the fastest (even though you're in a tube, you still have to fight gravity) and looking for the single speed boost. Multiplayer is slightly more fun, but only because you don't have to endure the game alone.

The course design is there, and the graphic prowess is there. The only problem is that other games

were there five years ago. **A** Andrew Pfister

PUB: NEC	PRICE: \$39.99
DEV: NEC	PLAYERS: 1-4
RE: AVAILABLE NOW	ORIGIN: JAPAN

GMR LACKS THRILLS

NOT AS GOOD AS: QUANTUM REDSHIFT
OR EVEN: EXTREME-G3
WAIT FOR IT: F-ZERO GC



PHANTASY STAR ONLINE

VOICE CHAT, MY ASS

TEEN | XBOX [REVIEWED] | GC

➔ In case you've managed to somehow avoid *Phantasy Star Online* up to now, here's the series in a nutshell: It is a sci-fi/fantasy RPG playable by four persons both online and off. The game dips into the rich *Phantasy Star* heritage, established on old Sega systems like Master System and Genesis, to create a world that resonates with both old-school gamers and newbies alike.

Groundbreaking for its time, *PSO's* big catch is the social angle, which lets you communicate with other players during online games. The other hook is the collection aspect, which, as anyone who has played *Diablo* can tell you, is irresistible; another level-up is only a few hours away, and another rare item just as likely. Questing and finding better stuff is an addictive quality that has rallied more than 500,000 gamers (over the various *PSO* incarnations) to the cause. And now, it's on Xbox.

For Xbox owners, this brings both good and bad news. The good news is that the entire game, which GameCube owners have been enjoying for roughly half a year now, has arrived on Xbox completely intact. Considering the muscle under the hood, one should expect no less. And with Xbox broadband support built in, there will be none of that adapter shortage stuff that plagued GameCube owners. Nor will Xbox users have to sweat finding a keyboard since 1) Microsoft is providing USB keyboard adapters for the mere cost of shipping, and 2) the Xbox version supports voice chat.

The bad news is, while the game has arrived completely intact, it has arrived only intact; if you're looking for any enhancements to rub in the face of Cube owners, you won't find any here. It's exactly the same as what has come before. The other problem is that the much-vaunted voice chat works only some of the time. If you're not plagued by latency, you're often unable to hear certain party members. If chat is working properly, it's great, but that's a big if. Of course, you can still lose all your items to the Frozen Screen of Death; the presence of hacked characters online screws up the game's balance. And not being able to play offline without an active Xbox Live account is just lame, Microsoft! For newbies, this is still a great game, but for veterans of previous iterations, there's no reason to switch. **C** James Mielke

PUB: MICROSOFT
DEV: SONIC TEAM
RE: AVAILABLE NOW

PRICE: \$39.99
PLAYERS: 1-4
ORIGIN: JAPAN

GMR

NOT ALL THAT 7/10

ALMOST AS GOOD AS: MORROWIND
SOMEHOW INFERIOR TO: THE GAMECUBE *PSO*
WAIT FOR IT: TRUE FANTASY LIVE ONLINE



XB

GC

K-1 GRAND PRIX

KICKY? FAST? KICKY FAST!

TEEN | PS2

➔ Arriving at a time when the gaming public has been inundated for a few years by hug-a-thons posing as *Ultimate Fighting Championship* (or, if you will, *Pride*), *K-1 Grand Prix* comes roaring out of the gate swinging and, we should note, kicking. Unlike the fighters who would call themselves "ultimate," the only time any of *K-1*'s pugilists lie down is when it's for the count.

Based on the real-world K-1 league, the 20-plus fighters that grace the game (sorry, but a Create-A-Player mode is conspicuously absent) represent a wide variety of fighting styles, including karate, kickboxing, tae kwon do, and kung fu. While our personal favorite (savate—the French form of kickboxing) isn't available, we'll let that slide.

K-1 packs fluid, responsive controls of the *Tekken* variety (left punch, right punch, kicks, etc.) combined with trouble-free 360-degree movement. Additionally, the game's combination of force feedback and snappy sound effects will have you looking forward to knockout punches.

Dishing out and avoiding KO's

depends on how carefully you monitor your body condition. Knowing when to move in and when to back off are as crucial here as in boxing, and *K-1* does a great job balancing the risks and rewards of offense and defense. Happily, keeping track of your fighter's status is easy, thanks to the sensibly designed Stamina gauge that's both legible and unobtrusive. Of course, the extremely solid graphics (it's still no *Soul Calibur*, but what the hey) and hulking combatants are enough to nudge even the most unfamiliar *K-1* consumer to take the plunge. With lots of modes and fantastic multiplayer action, *K-1* is worth investigation by both sports fans and fighting game lovers alike. **K**

—James Mielke

PUB	KONAMI	PRICE	\$39.99
DEV	KONAMI	PLAYERS	2
REL	JULY 2003	ORIGIN	JAPAN

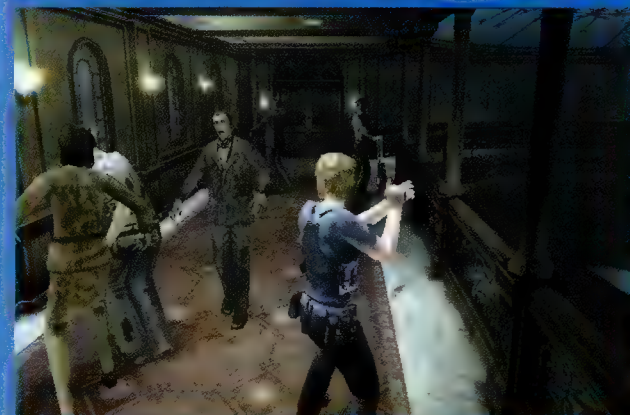
GMR A HIT SINGLE 8/10

BETTER THAN: ANY UFC OR PRIDE FC GAME
NOT AS GOOD AS: DEAD OR ALIVE 3
WAIT FOR IT: VIRTUA FIGHTER 4 EVOLUTION



[WAR OF THE BLOCKHEADS]

One of *K-1 Grand Prix*'s coolest features is the hidden RoboK1 Super Fight mode you unlock once you've beaten the game in Story mode. Each time you clear the Story mode with a fighter, his blockheaded equivalent is unlocked for use in RoboK1 Super Fight. This is based on Konami's Japanese line of battery-powered Rock 'Em Sock 'Em-esque K1 toys.



RESIDENT EVIL: DEAD AIM

IF YOU LIKE PIÑA COLADAS...

MATURE | PS2

➔ A few years ago, Capcom decided the world just wasn't getting enough *Resident Evil*. So it quickly threw together a sloppy light-gun game, slapped the *Gun Survivor* subtitle on it, then let it loose on the world like so many T viruses. Most of us were immune, so Capcom went back to the lab to develop a new strain.

Though it's a light-gun shooter, *Dead Aim* is rife with the same old schlock-horror clichés that have been fueling the *Resident Evil* series to date: cheesy story, scripted "shock" sequences, and annoyingly persistent zombies that can take 19 bullets to the face before taking their final dirt nap. Fortunately, Capcom tossed out the more cumbersome series standbys, such as limited ammo and save ribbons, and focused more on the faster-paced action of the game. The pace is so fast, however, that you'll likely finish the entire game in less than three

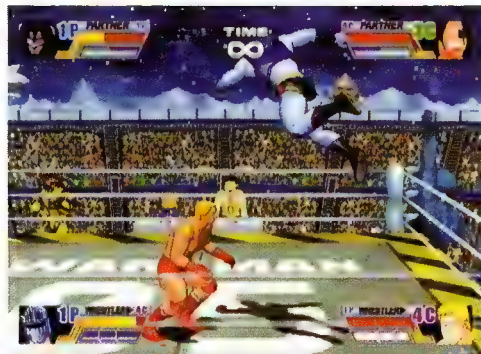
hours. There's not much backtracking through the small levels (a small cruise ship and an island lab), and the only real difficulty comes from figuring out how to avoid the agile bosses.

Enjoying *Dead Aim* is dependent on your preestablished love of gun games, and what it comes down to is a mildly confusing set of guidelines: It's not worth playing without a Guncon, but it's not worth buying a Guncon for, and even if you had one, the short playtime isn't worth the cash. **K** —Andrew Pfister

PUB	CAPCOM	PRICE	\$39.99
DEV	CAPCOM	PLAYERS	1
REL	AVAILABLE NOW	ORIGIN	JAPAN

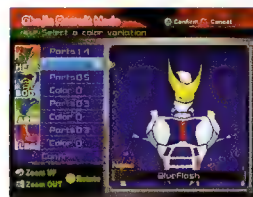
GMR LACKS TEETH 5/10

BETTER THAN: RESIDENT EVIL: GUN SURVIVOR
NOT AS GOOD AS: ELEMENTAL GEARBOLT
WAIT FOR IT: TIME CRISIS 3



[MAKE MEN MIGHTY]

In case the default wrestlers included with *Ultimate Muscle* aren't enough for you, the game's Create-A-Wrestler mode should more than satisfy your need to put a custom character in the ring. With more than a dozen fully realized alternate wrestlers at the ready (like big men in dog suits, frog warriors, and giant coconut guys), the fun really starts when you mix and match pieces and colors. Check out our *Mega Man*-like fighter to the right. **▶**



ULTIMATE MUSCLE

A WINNER IS YOU!

TEEN | GC

PUBLISHER: BANDAI
DEVELOPER: AKI
PRICE: \$49.99
RELEASE: JUNE 2003
PLAYERS: 1-4
ORIGIN: JAPAN

➔ It was only five issues ago that **GMR** profiled our 50 most-anticipated games of the year. Many have come and gone and left us more than a little disappointed in the process, but No. 42 on that list, *Ultimate Muscle: Legends vs. New Generation*, most certainly has not.

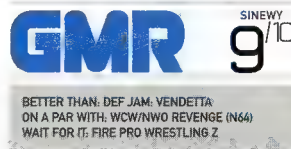
Crafted by the premier wrestlesmiths at Aki (*Def Jam: Vendetta*), *Ultimate Muscle* takes the loony Fox Networks license and throws the hormone-inflated show-boating (and bad hair) typical of the WWE out the window in favor of a game that moves fast, controls brilliantly, and looks utterly fantastic.

Dressing up the heroes of the Muscle League in a glossy cel-shaded palette,

Ultimate Muscle lets its freak flag fly with a quiver full of physically improbable, over-the-top special moves that may lack the sweaty ardor of "real" wrestling but are totally faithful to the game's source material—and more enjoyable for it. Unleashing each wrestler's moves (from a stock character like Robin Mask or a created character cooked up in Muscle's funky Create-A-Player mode) is an intuitive affair, thanks to the smartly mapped controls. In no time flat, gamers of all skill ranges can pull off flying suplexes and reverse pile drivers with the best of them, making single or multiplayer matches (up to four people) a grand time for all.

Ultimate Muscle may not have a

features list as deep as a *Smackdown!* game, but the Story mode, the horde of unlockable characters, the excellent Create-A-Wrestler mode, and the hundreds of collectable rubber *Ultimate Muscle* toys entirely justify the price of admission. More than pure memorabilia, *Ultimate Muscle* is the most pretense-free, action-packed wrestling game we've played since *Pro Wrestling*. Ignore it at your peril! **▶** *James Mielke*



2ND. OPINION

If you like WWE games, you might not get as big a charge out of this game as milky does—the characters definitely lean toward the bizarre. But if your principal concern is a fast-playing game full of wild moves, *Ultimate Muscle* should definitely take precedence over *The Rock*. **▶** *David Chen*



CHAOS LEGION

MY POSSE YOUR POSSE

TEEN | PS2

➔ Starving for an action game but find *Devil May Cry 2* somewhat lacking? Hungry for button-mashing intensity but don't feel like prancing around like a Chinese warlord à la *Dynasty Warriors 4*? If you are suffering from any of these symptoms, you'll be glad to know that Capcom has your cure.

From out of nowhere, *Chaos Legion* brings not only addictive, up-tempo hack-n-slash action, but also a great new A.I. system that raises the bar on computer-assisted beat 'em ups. The story focuses on the exploits of Sieg Wahrheit and his crusade against former pal Victor Delacroix to avenge tragedies past. Clichéd plot twists aside, the story merely serves as an excuse for Sieg (and, briefly, girl pal Arcial) to run through 15-plus levels of in-your-face mayhem. Much like *Crimson Sea*, *Chaos Legion* throws wave after wave of insectoid and humanesque enemies at you, with a boss usually in need of an ass-whupping before you can progress to the next area.

Helping you dol out the whuppings



are the various legions, each specializing in different attacks. Some legions excel in hand-to-hand combat, while others use crossbows effective at sniping enemies from afar. Every enemy you kill earns you points you can use to level up your legions, increasing both their numbers and strength. Unlike the bodyguards in *Dynasty Warriors 4*, who offer passive support, Sieg's legions are downright aggressive. Watching them gang up on the opposition never gets old. The only thing keeping this game from greatness, despite the energized pace, is the repetitious action. Aside from that, *Chaos Legion* is a beautiful and exciting game. **A-** James Mielke

PUB: CAPCOM
DEV: CAPCOM
REL: JULY 2003
PRICE: \$49.99
PLAYERS: 1
ORIGIN: U.S.A.

GMR 8/10

BETTER THAN: STATE OF EMERGENCY
NOT AS GOOD AS: GUARDIAN HEROES
WAIT FOR IT: DYNASTY WARRIORS 4 XL



G1 JOCKEY 3

WHOA, NELLY

EVERYONE | PS2

➔ If you care enough about the niche genre of Japanese horse-racing simulations to be reading this review, then you have one question: Do I buy this one or *Gallop Racer 2003* (reviewed in *GMR* #05)? I'll save that for the end, but here's a hint: You're soaking in it. *G1 Jockey* has better graphics and more complex—and I assume authentic—gameplay. You actually control things like the bit and the horse's lead leg in turns. I don't know what any of it means, but horse people will. It's not accessible enough to draw people into the sport, but it will satisfy fans of the ponies. Giddy-up. **B+**

Tom Price



PUB: XBOX
DEV: XBOX
REL: AVAILABLE NOW
PRICE: \$49.99
PLAYERS: 1-2
ORIGIN: U.S.A.

GMR 8/10

BETTER THAN: GALLOP RACER 2003
NOT AS GOOD AS: RIDING A REAL HORSE
WAIT FOR IT: YOUR SHIP TO COME IN

BLOODY ROAR EXTREME

CALL THE VET

TEEN | XBOX

➔ Everything about *Bloody Roar Extreme* has a perhaps-intentional feeling. The mismatched menagerie of characters, the shallow fighting system—purposeful or not? Impossible to tell.

But know this: *BRE* is not good. Since the fighting lacks rhythm and finesse, pounding one button can and will defeat a player who's foolishly making a good-faith effort to control his character.

The bipolar computer is even worse. Sometimes it plays punching bag to your button mashing, and sometimes it blocks perfectly and then unleashes a dialed-in supermove for 60 percent damage. Avoid this rabid dog. **C-** Paul Byrnes



PUB: KONAMI
DEV: HUDSON/CONTRASTING
REL: AVAILABLE NOW
PRICE: \$29.99
PLAYERS: 1-2
ORIGIN: JAPAN

GMR 4/10

BETTER THAN: KAKUTO CHOUJIN
NOT AS GOOD AS: DOA3
WAIT FOR IT: SOUL CALIBUR II

SW: CLONE WARS

WARS BORES

TEEN | XBOX [REVIEWED] | PS2

➔ Like so many mediocre *Star Wars* games before it, *The Clone Wars* sheds substance for splendor, featuring the standard strafing, shooting, and occasional retrieval of things. The addition of Xbox Live play certainly adds to the appeal, and the *Rogue Leader*-like sorties are nice, but it still feels soulless at the core. Impressive in the technical sense (there's a whole lotta action onscreen, but little of it affects the player), it certainly looks and sounds like *Star Wars*, awkward narrative and all. Which makes *The Clone Wars* every bit as good as the movie upon which it is based, and no better. **C-** David Chen



PUB: LUCASARTS
DEV: PANDEMIC
REL: AVAILABLE NOW
PRICE: \$49.99
PLAYERS: 1-4 (1-8 ONLINE)
ORIGIN: U.S.A.

GMR 6/10

BETTER THAN: STAR WARS OBI-WAN
NOT AS GOOD AS: SW: JEDI KNIGHT KNIGHT II
WAIT FOR IT: A TRULY GREAT STAR WARS GAME



TROPICO 2

LIKE A TROPICAL VACATION IN JERSEY

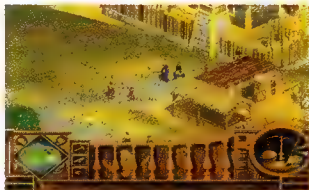
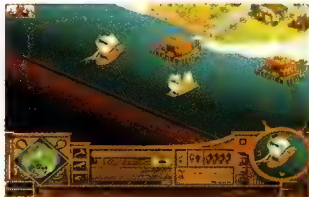
TEEN | PC

➔ It ain't original, it ain't exciting, but it has pirates, wenches, and lots of booze. An otherwise pedestrian city-building game, only *Tropico 2*'s setting salvages it from being a complete shipwreck.

Using a slightly updated engine, *Tropico 2* turns *Tropico*'s Banana Republic simulation into a pirate island sim set in the 17th century. As a pirate king, your goal usually involves collecting as much loot as possible. To do so, you must build an economy to supply food, alcohol, prostitutes, weapons, and ships on an otherwise deserted island. Your workers are slaves kidnapped by your pirates, "rescued" from shipwrecks, or donated by friendly nations. Most of the game involves keeping these workers in check with frightening gallows and overseers, as well as churches to induce docility. Their labor provides the luxuries demanded by your buccaneers, who will otherwise feed you to the sharks.

The island-management stuff is pretty run-of-the-mill, marred by a clunky interface that requires too many clicks and menus. Since your economy is based solely on wood and pirates are your only source of income, the economic game is pretty much identical no matter what scenario you're playing. This is definitely disappointing to fans of the original, in which you could choose between industry or tourism and democracy or dictatorship.

The only element that really sets *Tropico 2* apart is the ability to send your pirates on missions. Once you've built a



ship and supplied it with food and weapons, you can send it out to kidnap new workers, plunder trade lanes, and explore the seas to find more victims, providing a nice break from the game's economic monotony.

Tropico 2 never does anything horribly wrong, but the end product feels listless and lacks the charm that made the original so much fun. **C**

—Di Luo

PUB. GATHERING PRICE \$39.99
DEV. FROG CITY PLAYERS 1
REL. AVAILABLE NOW DESIGN U.S.A.

GMR A CRAP VACATION
S/10

BETTER THAN: EMPEROR: RISE OF THE MIDDLE KINGDOM
NOT AS GOOD AS: SIM CITY 4
WAIT FOR IT: MAJESTY 2



EVIL DEAD: AFOB

DEAD ON ARRIVAL

MATURE | XBOX [REVIEWED] | PS2

➔ Well, this game is a fistful of something, that's for sure. *Evil Dead: A Fistful of Boomstick* marks the second time Bruce Campbell's darkly comic hero, Ash, has been dropped into a game besmirching the *Evil Dead* series' good name.

The deadites have returned, and Ash and his trusty boomstick must again set things right. He does this, of course, by running back and forth across visually indistinct indoor and outdoor environments, fetching things, and running dull errands. Endless keys need finding. Watches and papers demand delivery. Silver won't find itself. As you're running back and forth, there's a very real sense the game might be better titled *Evil Dead: The Creepy Courier Caper*.

Ash travels to several places throughout time where mapmaking technology has escaped the local population. This means he must blindly grope through each new series of streets or curved and darkened forest pathways. Under normal circumstances, this would just be tedious, but combined with endless deadite enemies and little

in the way of ammunition and health packs, it's a sermon on frustration. Unless Ash relies solely on projectile-based weapons, like his boomstick or hand cannon, multiple deadites will swarm and flank him, gouging great chunks from his health bar in mere seconds. Once wounded, it's near-impossible to restore his health. Health packs picked up from deadite corpses barely restore any of Ash's life, and first-aid kits scattered throughout the game are few and far between. Ultimately, this means fighting in *Boomstick* really isn't worth it—which is a tragedy, because pretty much all the game has to offer is a lot of deadly cool comic quips. **C**

—Greg Orlando

PUB. THQ PRICE \$19.99
DEV. VIS PLAYERS 1
REL. AVAILABLE NOW DESIGN U.S.A.

GMR DEAD, NOT DEADLY
4/10

BETTER THAN: EVIL DEAD: HAIL TO THE KING
NOT AS GOOD AS: STATE OF EMERGENCY
WAIT FOR IT: ENTER THE MATRIX



XB

PC

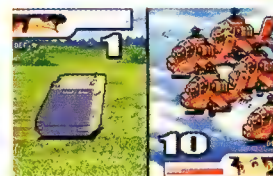
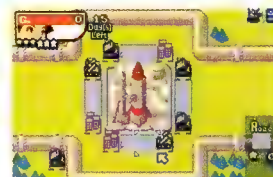


GBA REVIEW

ANOTHER MONTH. ANOTHER BATCH OF BIG-LITTLE SURPRISES. CHECK OUT THIS MONTH'S PORTABLE STASH



→ AW2's weapons of mass destruction look more like weapons of mass cuteness.



ADVANCE WARS 2: BHR

ONE GOOD TURN DESERVES ANOTHER

EVERYONE | GBA

➔ Because of its insanely addictive turn-based gameplay, sharp presentation, and supercute anime style, *Advance Wars* was one of those must-have GBA titles when the system first came out. Now comes the much anticipated *Advance Wars 2*, and while the sequel is mostly more of the same, the addition of more units, maps, and features improves the game without changing the underlying core of gameplay that makes the series so great.

This time around, there are more commanding officers (the characters

you inhabit) in addition to originals like Max and Olaf, and with more COs come more superpowers. Now, however, there's a second level of superpower for each CO, which can be achieved by saving up more points. You and your COs of the Orange Star, Blue Moon, Yellow Comet, and Green Earth armies are trying to repel the menacing Black Hole army as they spread their goth-nazi evil.

While the basic mechanics of moving your troops around, fighting, and capturing haven't changed, some map elements have. Now, there are more items, like fixed guns for the

enemy to pound you with; there's also a new missile-silo property that doesn't need to be captured, but can be launched (only once) to devastating effect by an infantry unit. Some maps also feature a weird pipeline obstacle that can't even be flown over (that's one big pipe, yo) but can be blasted through at certain points. These things increase the puzzlelike aspect of the game a great deal and make it more challenging. Gamers will find a few things particularly annoying, like the APC and transport helicopter being able to carry only one infantry unit at a time, but these are minor quibbles.

The game has changed just enough to please loyal fans, and when you've got a formula that makes for such a compelling gaming experience, why mess with it? **A-**

—Tom Price

PUB	NINTENDO	PRICE	\$29.99
DEV	INTELLIGENT SYSTEMS	PLAYERS	1-4
REL	AVAILABLE NOW	ORIGIN	JAPAN

GMR TEN HUT! 8/10

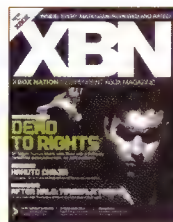
BETTER THAN: POKEMON RUBY & SAPPHIRE
NOT AS GOOD AS: TACTICS OGRE, KNIGHT OF LODIS
WAIT FOR IT: FINAL FANTASY TACTICS ADVANCE

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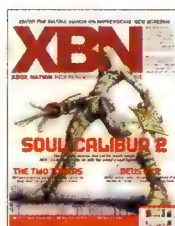
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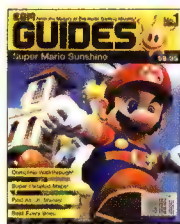
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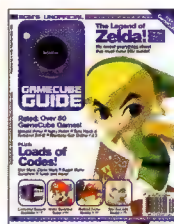
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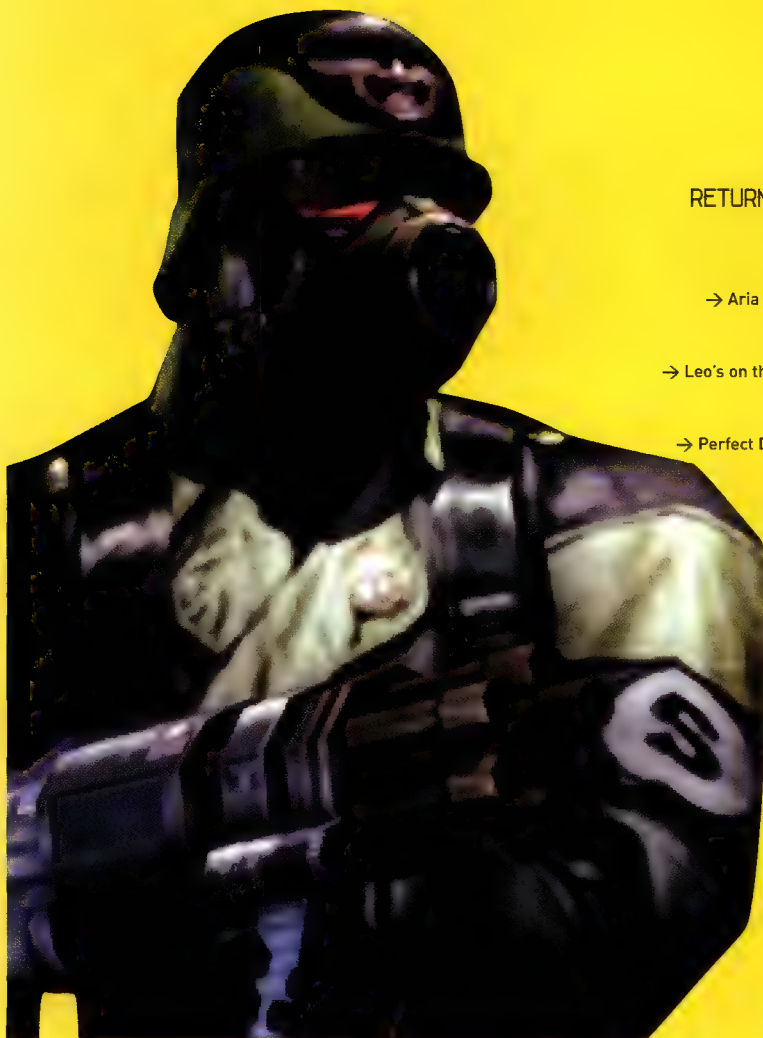
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THIS MONTH IN MORE

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→ He doesn't want to spend his last days killing snakes

RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN: TIDES OF WAR

WE HAVE WAYS OF MAKING YOU WIN



BOOT-IN-THE-ASS CAMP

➔ Getting through the single-player campaign of *Return to Castle Wolfenstein: Tides of War* is your own damn problem. DO YOU READ ME, SOLDIER? My job, ladies, is to train you how to fight like a man online.

Regardless of which map you're choosing, role you're playing, or side you're on, you ain't getting outta basic without this tactical intel. Here are some simple tips to help keep you sissies alive.

➔ LEARN THE LAY OF THE LAND

Study each of the maps carefully. Maybe even play a couple times by yourself to find all the hidden nooks. This way, in a real match you can work the world to your advantage.

➔ CROUCHING SOLDIER, HIDDEN BONUS

Crouching is good for stealth, but it also improves your aim—so give it a shot.

➔ FIRE-AND-FORGET

The machine guns are messy, so fire in short bursts. This improves your aim, Tex. After firing a few rounds, your gun tends to bounce around a lot more, and needless to say, it's a lot tougher to aim. The added bonus: You conserve ammo.

➔ GET TO HIGH GROUND, DOUBLE TIME!

While sprinting, jump onto ladders and you'll get to the top in half the time.

➔ BE LIGHT ON YOUR FEET

In a firefight, circle and strafe around people while jumping, so they can't draw a bead on you. Speaking of moving, try to stay out of choke points and doorways. They make you an easy target.

➔ DON'T PISS OFF THE WRONG PEOPLE

If you're playing with friendly fire turned on, keep your crosshairs off your teammates—unless you want to get quickly kicked out of a match. Also, some weapons (bazookas and grenades) affect a large area—so watch your aim, slick.

➔ CHOOSE WISELY

Some jobs are better suited for some maps, so consider where you're fighting when picking a class and choosing a weapon.

➔ KEEP MOVIN'!

Any chump knows to keep running and jumping to avoid getting shot, but *Wolfenstein* makes it a little trickier: Heavy weapons will weigh you down. To avoid getting gakked, equip knives, handguns, or a submachine gun and sprint before switching over to that Venom gun and showing 'em who's boss.

➔ LISTEN FOR THE "CLICK"

Always reload your gun. It takes about three seconds for you to reload your weapon, and it's best not to get caught with your pants down. On the other hand, if you hear that click—and it isn't coming from your weapon—someone else is nearby and changing clips. You've got seconds to find the guy and pounce.

➔ GRENADE!

Let go of the grenade before the five-count or go boorn. Throw it on three, and it explodes as soon as it hits the ground. At four explodes in midair; anything sooner lets the bad guys run for cover.

XB

KNOW YOUR ROLE

 Choosing a character doesn't just mean you get a different weapon to play with—it means you've got a job to do! Here are some quick tips and rules to live by when playing each of the classes in the game.

SOLDIERS

The Soldier is the grunt. He's got access to the most weapons, and obviously, you need to know how to use them. Here's the skinny on a couple guns.

THE FLAME GAME

If you're in a really tight space and squaring off against a better player, just spray. The flamethrower is handy for two things: Burning (duh!) everything in a tiny space and concealing where you are. Newbs that can't seem to draw a bead will appreciate the turn-and-burn technique, but it's a good defensive tool as well. After all, your enemy can't hit what it can't see. Just be careful—you're not fireproof, y'know.

SPITTIN' VENOM

The Venom machine gun is brutal, but it overheats quickly and takes a couple seconds to rev up for shooting. So, frequently tap the Fire button so you're always ready to fire at a moment's notice. Also, keep a close eye on the weapon icon—"cause this weapon overheats fast!

SNIPE AWAY

The Mauser rifle isn't 100 percent accurate. Sure, it's deadly, but your aim can be a little shaky. So when in doubt, lead your targets.



LIEUTENANTS

This guy is barking out orders and keeping the team well stocked, so make sure you have at least one Lieutenant on your side in every match.

CALL IN THE CAVALRY

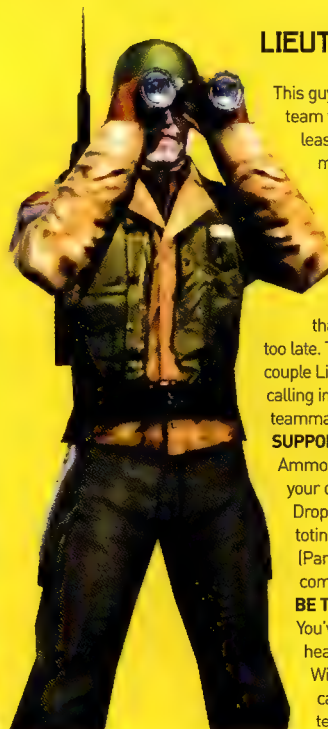
If you see a bunch of enemy soldiers clustered or just want to protect a pass, call in an air strike. A really good strategy is to throw it behind the enemy. This way they won't even know that an air strike has been called until it is too late. Trying to defend a position requires a couple Lieutenants on the same team alternating calling in air strikes. Oh, and try to keep your teammates clear of the target zone.

SUPPORT OUR TROOPS

Ammo doesn't grow on trees. That's why it's your duty to keep the supply lines flowing. Drop ammo packs for Medics and Soldiers toting big weapons and little ammo (Panzerfausts, Mausers, and the like only come with limited rounds).

BE THE EYES AND THE EARS

You've got binoculars—and a communicator headset—Lieutenant, learn to use both. With your eagle-eye view of the map, you can shout out enemy positions to your teammates.



MEDICS

You might think that this character is pointless—and you'd be right until you find yourself face down in a ditch, respawning seconds later at the opposite end of the map.

ON THE FRONT LINES

Medics can't hide in their foxholes like little girls. They need to be out in the fields healing squadmates as needed. Be ready to run into fire to save your man, because if he dies, it'll be at least a minute or two until he gets back into a position to help you.

BE A BAND-AID

You can't be everywhere on the map at the same time. So, try dropping a load of med packs in a secured area for your teammates.

FOLLOW THE CROWD

Go to where you're needed. When you first spawn, look for a large group of your teammates. You'll do the most good as a Medic when you follow a group into battle for support.



ENGINEERS

They may not get all the glory, but the engineers have some of the most unique abilities in the game and are great early on in objective-based maps.

THE GO-TO GUY

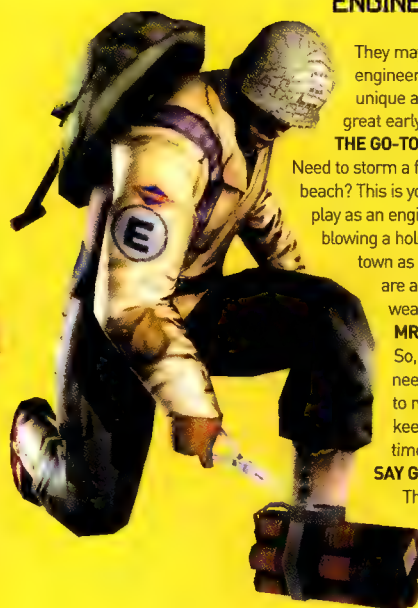
Need to storm a fortress or crash up on the beach? This is your guy. Even if you don't want to play as an engineer for the entire game, try blowing a hole in a sea wall, then going to town as a demolitions expert. Engineers are also useful for blowing up enemy weapon encampments.

MR. FIXIT

So, what happens when stuff needs to get repaired? If you need to make sure that the guns will keep running—or shooting—on time, station an Engineer close by.

SAY GOOD-BYE TO CAMPERS

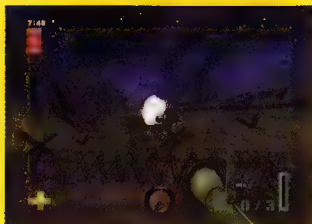
This is the only class capable of carrying dynamite. If there's a corner of the map that some punks like camping in, why not leave 'em a nitroglycerine-laced surprise?



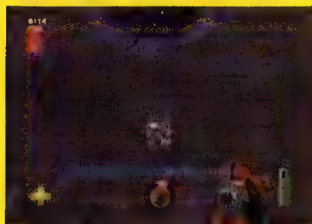
RECON INTEL

➔ We've invaded 17 maps so far (13 maps come with the game, and we've seen four download levels), and our favorite one by far is the Beach Invasion level. Are you ready to relive D-Day with 15 buddies over Xbox Live? After consulting with developer Nerve Software President Brandon James, we came up with a couple key tips. With luck, you may be able to beat the developers at their own game.

ALLIED TACTICS



➔ If you're the Allies trying to storm the beach and you keep getting shot down, grab a Panzerfaust. Take aim at the chuckleheads hiding in the pillboxes firing off the MG42 machine guns. If you do it just right, you'll be able to take out any jokers inside. Splash damage + very little room to move = easy target.



➔ First, blow the door leading to the bunker and do everything possible to grab the reinforcement flag. Once the flag is pulled, the Allied team

will likely choose to reinforce this area; hence, it might be a good idea to try and control it. As an Allied soldier, you certainly don't want the Axis forces to take this position!

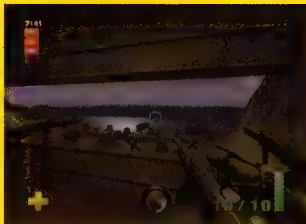


➔ Once the seawall is breached, the Axis will start moving toward the underground document room. From this point on, Allied teamwork will be a necessity. There are multiple passageways into and out of the document room, so try and spread the Allied forces out. Just be sure not to spread them out *too* thin!



➔ When taking the documents to the transmitter, don't go immediately up the nearest stairs, unless you're absolutely certain that the Axis forces will not reinforce before you get there. There's nothing wrong with hanging back with the documents and waiting for a fresh group of teammates to escort you. With Soldiers and Lieutenants leading the charge to the transmitter, victory is assuredly in the hands of the Allies!

AXIS TACTICS



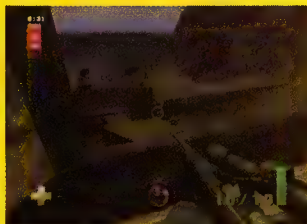
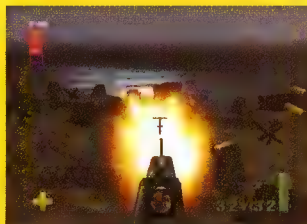
➔ If you're on the Axis, here's a difficult—but clever—tactic. First, jump your own seawall. If you stealthily loop back around to where the PT boats are, the Allies will be focused on the seawall. Do it right and you'll be able to cap the competition (a silent knife kill to the back of the head is preferable) before they even knew what hit 'em.



➔ A key rule to remember when trying to repel the Allies at the beach is to spread out and get to key positions quickly. Get snipers up on high ground, mach schnell.



➔ Your job is to stop the Allied advance on the beach, so keep them far away from the flag poles. If the allies manage to take these points, they'll start respawning from there.



➔ Guarding flags doesn't mean you need to be standing on top of them. Find a good hiding spot and take out guys as they approach—don't crowd up, making yourself an easy target.



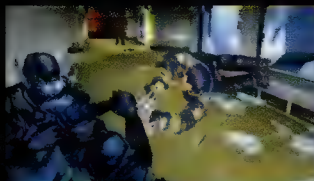
➔ You want to keep the high ground inside the bunker. Have one of your Lieutenants on a ladder start dropping grenades to keep the Allied advance at bay. **IC**

XB



A.I.

HIS CODES ARE REAL. BUT HE IS NOT



01 X2: WOLVERINE'S REVENGE PS2, XBOX, GC

➔ Wolverine pretty much created the term "hack and slash." But if your healing factor isn't helping you protect a world that hates and fears you, try these codes:

	PlayStation 2	Xbox	GameCube
Unlock All Costumes	Triangle, Circle, Triangle, Square, Square, Square, L1 + L2	X, L, X, L, X, X, L, R	B, X, B, Y, Y, Y, L, Z
Unlock All Cerebro Files	Triangle, Circle, Triangle, Square, Square, Square, R1 + R2	X, L, X, L, X, X, R, L	B, X, B, Y, Y, Y, R, Z
Unlock All Levels	Triangle, Circle, Triangle, Square, Triangle, Circle, L1 + R1	X, L, X, L, X, L, L, R	B, X, B, Y, B, X, L, R, Z
Unlock Pause Menu Cheat/Invulnerability/ Freeze Frame	Triangle, Triangle, Circle, Circle, Square, Square, Circle, Circle, L1 + L2 + R1 + R2	X, X, L, L, L, L, X, X, L, R, L, R	B, B, X, X, Y, Y, X, X, L, L, R, R, Z

GameBoy Advance

Use these codes to even the odds. On the Slot Select screen, hold the Left shoulder button and enter the following:

Invincibility

Down, Up, Down, Down, Up, Down, Select

All Power-ups

Right, Left, Right, Left, Right, Left, Right

100 Lives

Right, Right, Right, Right, Right, Right, Right

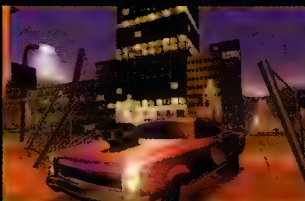
Wolverine Regenerates With Claws Extended

Right, Up, Down, Right, Left, Select, Select

Infinite Double Jumps

Select, Left, Up, Down, Down, Up, Down

02 MIDNIGHT CLUB II PS2



➔ Racing through streets at night doesn't get much more exciting than this. But if you're having trouble telling your gas pedal from your stick shift, break out one of these codes to see the game in its true glory. Go to the Cheat menu from the Options menu, then punch in one of these. The codes are case sensitive.

All Locations and Cars

rimbuk

Guns and Rockets (use L3 and R3 in Arcade mode to fire)

savethetikids

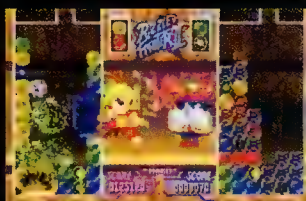
Unlimited Nitrous Boosts

greenLantern

Invulnerability

gladiator

04 SUPER PUZZLE FIGHTER 2 TURBO GBA



➔ Hailed by many as the best puzzle game since Tetris, Puzzle Fighter fueled Capcom's arcade division for years. There are more than the eight selectable characters shown in the screen.

Akuma

Player One: Highlight Morrigan, hold Select, and press Down, Down, Down, Left, Left, Left, A. Player Two: Highlight Felicia, hold Select, and enter Down, Down, Down, Right, Right, Right, A.

Dan

Player One: Highlight Morrigan, hold Select, and press Left, Left, Left, Down, Down, Down, A. Player Two: Highlight Felicia, hold Select, and press Right, Right, Right, Down, Down, Down, A.

Devilot

Player One: Highlight Morrigan, hold Select, and press Left, Left, Left, Down, Down, Down. Wait until the timer reaches 10 seconds, then press A. Player Two: Highlight Felicia, hold Select, and press Right, Right, Right, Down, Down, Down. Wait until the timer reaches 10 seconds, then press A.

Hsien-Ko's Paper Talisman

Player One: Highlight Morrigan and hold Select, then highlight Hsien-Ko and press A. Player Two: Highlight Felicia and hold Select, then highlight Hsien-Ko and press A.

Anita

Player One: Highlight Morrigan and hold Select, then highlight Donovan and press A. Player Two: Highlight Felicia and hold Select, then highlight Donovan and press A.

03 PRIMAL PS2



➔ There are a ton of codes for Primal, but Sony's as silent as a statue. We have learned of the most powerful one, however. Hold L1 + L2 + R1 + R2 for five seconds at the Main menu and the Magic Code section will appear. Hold down X, then move left or right to change the first string of A's into the word "Monstrous."

05 FREELANCER PC



➔ If searching the infinite reaches of space is too much work, check out these locations to find some of the game's best-kept secrets.

System	Coordinates	Equipment Found
New York - Badlands	6D	Gunslinger Mk I Bounty Hunter
New York - Badlands	6E	Justice Liberty Laser Cannon Mk III
California - Tahoe Ice Cloud	5C	Pyros Type 1 Outcast Particle Turret
New London - Cumbri	5C	Dublin Duster Neutron Blaster Mk I
Cortez - Roatan Cloud	5C	N/A
Bertonia 03 - Grasmere	6E	Angelito Turret MK I
Kyushu - Ohka Dust Field	4B	Blood Dragon Wakizashi Laser
Honshu - Hiyo Cloud	3C	Blood Dragon Tanto Laser Turret
Hokkaido - Kayo Cloud	3C	Sunfury 2 Kusari Photon Blaster
New Berlin - Ruhr Radiation	3C	Red Hessian Natter Zwei Laser
Iw06 - Reppu Cloud	5D	Liberty Rogue Vassago
Bering - Western Asteroid	6C	Xeno Advanced Tarantula Particle
Omega-5 - Hammen hole	5E	Corsair Salamanca Neutron Blaster
Omega-11 - Von Rohe Belt	5D	Winchester Mk II Bounty Hunter
Sigma-13 - Oxygen Pocket	4C	Weapon Code Name JADE
Sigma-19 - Hiryu Cloud	D3	Wyrn Type 1 Outcast Tachyon
Border World 06 - Kunashir	6E	Weapon Code Name BLUE BLAZE
Border World 10 - Northern Asteroid Field	3D	Gaia's Savior Type B
Edge World 04 - Napo Cloud	6E	THOR'S HAMMER
Border World 03 - Gubenfeld	5C	Weapon Code Name ONYX

06 VEXX PS2



➔ Vexx can be somewhat, er, vexing, so use these codes to help yourself get out of a tight spot.

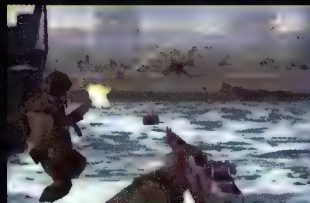
GameCube	PlayStation 2
Invincibility XXEVEDOMDOG	Invincibility XXEVREWOP
Level Select XXEVIPIKS	Level Select XXEVPRAW
Super Jumps XXEVT00FYTFIF	Super Jumps XXEVT00FYTFIF

07 MEGAMAN AND BASS GBA



➔ Part of the challenge in defeating any of the Mega Man titles is learning the best order to play the levels in. To tear through Mega Man and Bass, play the levels as follows and use the last obtained weapon to defeat the boss of the level you're on.
Beat Cold Man with your default weapon for your first level. Then fight Cold Man, Burner Man, Pirate Man, Ground Man, Tengu Man, Magic Man, Astro Man, and end with Dynamo Man.

08 MEDAL OF HONOR: FRONTLINE XBOX



➔ Type these codes into the Enigma machine for more Nazi-killing fun.

Bullet Shield
nohitsforu
All Bonuses
Enchilada
Invincibility
Pause the game while playing, press X, L1, B, R1, Back, Y, and X. The game will unpause if you've entered the code properly.

09 CASTLEVANIA: ARIA OF SORROW GBA



➔ There are several modes that can be unlocked by beating the game with the best possible ending. How do you do that? Well, before you fight Graham (ostensibly the last boss), you need to equip three specific souls: Succubus, Flame Demon, and Giant Bat. After taking out Graham, you'll be able to keep playing. Head over to the Floating Garden and enter the mysteriously closed door that has now been opened.

Boss Rush Mode
Fight all the bosses consecutively. Clear Boss Rush mode to play the game under Normal or Hard difficulty levels.
Soul Replay
Restart and play through with souls gathered from your last game.
Sound Mode
Explore Aria of Sorrow's sounds.
Play as Julius Belmont
Beat the game (any of the three endings will suffice), then enter "Julius" as your new game file.

10 DEF JAM: VENDETTA PS2



➔ There are more rappers in this game than profanities in 8 Mile. To unlock a wrestler, go to Battle mode and pick any kind of match. Enter your user ID, then when you get to the Character Selection screen, press the following buttons to choose your fighter:

PlayStation 2
Hold all four shoulder buttons, then for the character you want, press:

Arii
X, Square, Triangle, Circle, Square
Briggs (alternate costume)
X, Triangle, Circle, Square, Circle
Carla
X, Square, X, X, X
Chukkleez
Square, Square, Triangle, X, Circle
Cruz
Circle, Triangle, X, X, Circle
D-Mob
Square, Triangle, Circle, X, Circle
D-Mob (alternate costume)
Square, Square, Triangle, Square, Square
Deebo
Circle, Circle, X, X, Triangle
Deja
Circle, Square, Circle, Circle, X
DMX
Circle, X, Circle, Triangle, Square
Drake
Triangle, Square, Circle, X, X
Funkmaster Flex
Circle, Triangle, Circle, Circle, Square
Headache
Triangle, Triangle, Triangle, Square, Circle
House
Triangle, X, Triangle, Circle, X
Iceberg
Square, Triangle, Circle, Square, Circle
Ludacris
Circle, Circle, Circle, Square, Triangle
Manny (alternate costume)
Circle, Square, Circle, Square, Circle
Masa
X, Circle, Triangle, Square, Square
Method Man
Square, Circle, X, Triangle, Circle

PREVIEW

JEAN-LUC'S FINAL MISSION. LEO'S RUNNING (NOT WALKEN, HAHI), AND WE GET X-CITED



→ "I dunno, have you tried the Rogaine?"

→ Patrick Stewart tries to read Shinzon's mind, then realizes he's in the wrong movie.


STAR TREK: NEMESIS

THE NEXT GENERATION'S LAST HURRAH

RATED PG-13 | 116 MINUTES | 1 DISC | DIRECTED STUART BAIRD

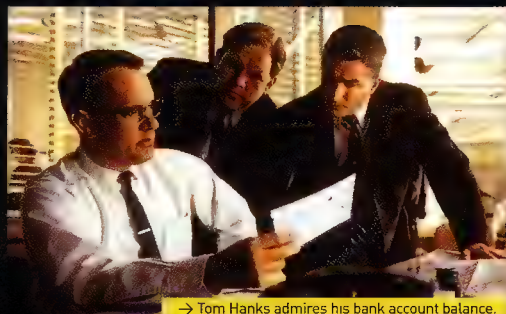
➔ The *Star Trek* franchise has taken in more than \$1 billion in worldwide box-office receipts. It's a juggernaut franchise, but the newest arrival, *Nemesis*, doesn't carry on the tradition of even-numbered *Trek* movies kicking ass. Suddenly, resistance doesn't seem so futile. The *Enterprise* always seems to be in the wrong place at the right time. Political upheaval calls for some on-the-spot negotiation by Picard, who finds himself across the table from Shinzon, an evil-inclined clone of his younger self.

Shinzon is a megalomaniac in possession of a weapon of mass destruction, and it's up to the *Enterprise* crew to stop him before he gets Earth in his sights. The crew are solid as ever, and Patrick Stewart always brings a level of depth and interest to the role, which makes up for many of the problems with this movie—not the least of which is a script that's adequate at best. *Star Trek* movies used to be events. Unfortunately, the feeling here is that we've been here before—which is ironic, given *Star Trek's*

epic tag line about boldly going, etc. That said, this is not simply a flat space-action flick; some interesting philosophical issues are woven into the action. In fact, the movie leaves us with the feeling that it should have been better. If there is an episode 11, let's hope it defies the odd-number jinx. **Special features:** Director's commentary, a handful of featurettes, and deleted scenes. 



→ Tom Hanks admires his bank account balance.



X2: X-MEN UNITED

SEE THIS MOVIE NOW



→ I'm too sexy for my claws, no way I'm disco dancing!



→ You've done it, Bill! You've finally hit that high note!



CATCH ME IF YOU CAN

WATCH IT IF YOU CAN

1 DISC | DIRECTED BY STEVEN SPIELBERG

➔ Based on the true story of con artist Frank Abagnale (Leonardo DiCaprio), who eluded the FBI for 5 years while cashing millions in forged checks, this is a frothy caper movie that provides a great vehicle for Leonardo DiCaprio to have fun in while Tom Hanks works on his frown.

Both actors are superbly cast—DiCaprio perfectly playing the serious criminal in a cat-and-mouse game as if it's all a bit of a lark. He brazenly impersonates airline pilots, doctors, and lawyers in his scams—all before his 21st birthday.

Tom Hanks is excellent as the weary agent who is always

two steps behind Frank but shows a glimmer of grudging respect for him.

At over two hours, the movie isn't short, but it flies by thanks to Spielberg's polished direction. The icing on the cake is Christopher Walken's dignified (and Oscar-nominated) performance as Abagnale's father.

Special features: The real-world background of this story provides the widescreen edition with a host of great special features, including a look at the casting process, a feature on the real Frank Abagnale, a making of feature, analysis from the perspective of the FBI and more. **IC**

➔ If you've ever had an interest in the X-Men or, at the least, saw the first movie, you owe it to yourself to see the sequel, *X2: X-Men United*. It picks up where the last movie left off, with Wolverine (Hugh Jackman) walking through the snowy wilderness of Canada, trying to recover his past. But in no time at all, the viewer is thrust into a propulsive tale of mutantphobia that mirrors the McCarthy witchhunts of the 1950s. Ultimately, the lesson learned by the movie's narrative, and the attention to character development not usually found in your average popcorn movie. The nuances of this ensemble cast's performances are surprisingly accomplished (Rebecca Romijn-Stamos does more with blue bodypaint and a pair of yellow contacts than you might expect), and in a movie filled with superheroes, you'd be surprised at just how many truly heroic moments there are (one scene with Nightcrawler will have your heart in your throat). Fan service this is, but excellent nonetheless.

While certainly the first (and definitely not the last) of this summer's special-effects blockbusters, the reason why *X2* succeeds is not because of the full-on display of each character's mutant powers (a la Nightcrawler's eye-popping debut)—it's because of the strength of the movie's narrative, and the attention to character development not usually found in your average popcorn movie. The nuances of this ensemble cast's performances are surprisingly accomplished (Rebecca Romijn-Stamos does more with blue bodypaint and a pair of yellow contacts than you might expect), and in a movie filled with superheroes, you'd be surprised at just how many truly heroic moments there are (one scene with Nightcrawler will have your heart in your throat). Fan service this is, but excellent nonetheless.

Despite the abundance of special-FX and the near-relentless pace, *X2* exerts a surprising amount of restraint, allowing room for the story to breathe and for the instances of sacrifice and loss to resonate. Providing a healthy balance of heroics and heart, *X2* achieves what most action movies don't. **IC**

X-2: X-MEN UNITED □ 20TH CENTURY FOX □ DIRECTOR: BRYAN SINGER □ STARRS: HUGH JACKMAN, PATRICK STEWART

XB:
PC
PS2
GBA
GC

RETROACTIVE

GMR REINVESTIGATES CLASSICS OF THE PAST. LET YOUR FREAK FLAG FLY

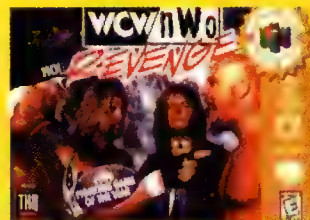
WCW/NWO REVENGE REVENGE SERVED COLD

OCTOBER 1998 FOR NINTENDO 64

➔ Back when *WCW vs. NWO Revenge* came out for N64, Ted Turner's pro wrestling business was the king of the ring. But in the world of professional "sports entertainment," success is a fleeting thing. Vince McMahon and his WWF, carried by the deteriorating knees of Stone Cold Steve Austin stormed back in the TV ratings and eventually forced Turner to sell the WCW to McMahon. As such, *Revenge* has been rendered almost completely irrelevant to the current pro wrestling scene, but it's still worth searching out if you're looking for a decent wrestling game that comes with bonus nostalgia.

On the N64, the Aki-developed *Revenge* is second only to *WWF No Mercy*, which is essentially the same engine and grapple system (the preferred system of choice among wrestling game aficionados) as *Revenge*, only it includes a CAW (create-a-wrestler) feature and a roster that more accurately represents WWE's current dominance. There are quite a few wrestlers to choose from, organized by their stable alliances and rivalries (there are even a few Japanese stars included in the lineup). Pick it up, because we're pretty sure La Parka could use the royalty payments. **1C**

—Andrew Pfister

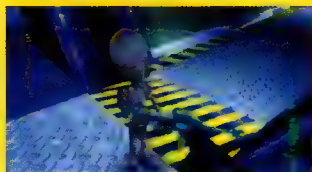
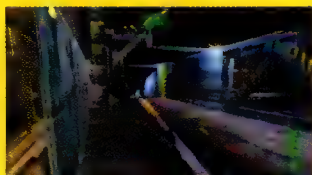


NOW ... The WCW is dead, and half the roster is either in the WWE or pursuing other career paths, so it's much less relevant. **EASY TO FIND**

GMR ^{SUPLEX} 7/10

THEN ... Aki delivered a great grappler with plenty of wrestlers and nice (for the time) visuals. The only thing missing was CAW.

GMR ^{SUPREPLEX} 8/10



PERFECT DARK NINTENDO GETS THE PICTURE

MAY 2000 FOR NINTENDO 64

➔ *GoldenEye* for N64 was a phenomenon. Arguably the best movie-to-game translation of them all and poster child for developer Rare, it's no wonder that the sequel (in spirit, if not license), *Perfect Dark*, received an inordinate amount of hype. And despite the widespread smattering of perfect scores, in hindsight it's hard to deny that it failed not just to live up to the hype, but also to its seminal predecessor.

For its time, *Perfect Dark* was a good first-person shooter. It was also very clichéd. The game is set in the future, where rookie spy Joanna Dark (code-named Perfect Dark, pre-anime Xbox makeover) battles an alien conspiracy involving—what else?—the government and an evil corporation. Joining you in the fight is Elvis, an annoying alien who

demonstrates precisely why Rare's character designs grate so much.

Despite carrying on most of the core gameplay from *GoldenEye* and improving on what was already a phenomenally addictive multiplayer mode, the rest of the game falls short. Level designs range from the sublime to the dismal, with long, dark, winding corridors a frequently reoccurring feature of later stages. Graphics were a step too far for the aging N64, resulting in a blurry mess that remarkably required an add-on (the 4MB RAM Pak) to even run the single-player mode. Given how many great first-person shooters have come since the game's release, this is only worth anything as a neat counterpoint to the upcoming Xbox prequel *Perfect Dark Zero*. **1C**

—Ravi Hiranand

NOW ... A blurry mess, unplayable ... without the RAM Pak—modern first-person shooters shame it. **DISAPPOINTABLE**

GMR ^{AGE NOT KIND} 5/10

THEN ... One of the better shooters ... and great multiplayer fun—paled in comparison only to *GoldenEye*.

GMR ^{NOT QUITE PERFECT} 9/10



GAME BOY CAMERA

MOMMA DON'T TAKE MY KODACHROME

1998 FOR GAME BOY

➔ In spite of its inherent simplicity, the Game Boy (and its color compatible successors) has been inundated with accessories, add-ons, and adapters since its release in 1989, including light-casting clip-ons, cheat-enabling cartridges, and even a Pocket Sonar attachment for finding fish. Seriously. In any case, the most extravagant of these—and, arguably, the most useful—was Nintendo's Game Boy Camera.

Half Nintendo novelty, half minigame menagerie, the Game Boy Camera is a fully functioning black-and-white camera with plenty of extras. A small lens is mounted at the top of this longer-than-usual cartridge; it even pivots 180 degrees, enabling the vainglorious to snap self-portraits. Amateur shutterbugs can even use the GBA SP's backlit screen as a flash, of sorts.

As with nearly all Nintendo accessories, the Game Boy Camera is delightfully easy to use—just plug it in and start snapping away. Users can snap up to 30 grainy pictures, but that's just the beginning. Selecting Shoot brings up the Camera mode, which includes the standard snapshot option, the ability to browse previously taken shots, and an Items

menu, which contains the Self-Timed, and Time-Lapse photo modes.

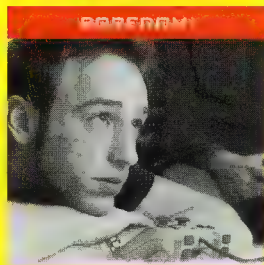
It's the Magic mode, however, that reveals a remarkable number of novelty lenses. These include an array of Montage modes that enable the photographer to split the frame into four separate parts, take pictures within pictures and engage in other hilarity-inducing mindbenders, such as shooting the top third of a frame, then the middle, and then the bottom. Similarly, the trick lenses add simple filters to the lens that mirror or invert the image, as well as make the image appear pinched or protruded. Four-part panoramic shots (vertical or horizontal) are also possible. To get the most out of the experience, of course, you'll also want the Game Boy Printer, but that's a rarer catch.

The Game Boy Camera also features some simple gameplay modes that make use of snapped pictures. Opening up the Game Face mode enables the player to take four separate shots of, say, someone opening and closing their mouth. The next step is to modify the snapped shots by using the primitive (but still entertaining) set of Stamp and Paint tools. Paint enables the user to doodle Etch-a-Sketch-style on the picture; Stamp features a small but

hilariously effective array of add-on eyes, lips, noses, and a mustache, as well as letters, numbers, icons (hearts, diamonds, stars), Nintendo mainstays such as Mario & Luigi, and a few Pokemon. After suitably savaging pictures, you can store them for use in one of the many animation tools and games. *Space Fever II* and juggling games are as simple as you'd expect, but the option to "cast" your own Boss Ship keeps things surprisingly fresh. Better yet is the relatively deep DJ mode that enables the player to create and save their own simple but funky tunes.

In the field of classic consoles and their accessories, the Game Boy Camera is in a league of its own. On one hand, it's a primitive device that makes first-generation webcams look positively professional. On the other, it's a unique gadget that, if nothing else, shows Nintendo knows and loves accessories nearly as well as it does franchises. Much like the Game Boy itself, the Game Boy Camera is a remarkable exercise in high-tech/low-tech thinking. It can also be found at less than \$20, making it a novel piece of videogame history that no true Nintendo-phile will want to be without. **IC**

David Chen



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NOW... Hard to find, but a few retailers have it—usually priced at less than \$20
OBTAINABLE

GMR SNAP IT UP!
7/10

THEN... Prohibitively priced at \$49.99, it was more of a novelty than a legit must-have...which, frankly, it wasn't.

GMR NEWFANGLED
5/10

THE LIST

GMA'S EXHAUSTIVE GUIDE TO THE ONLY GAMES THAT MATTER

BUYER'S GUIDE

PS2 TOP 100 HOW COULD YOU NOT OWN ONE?

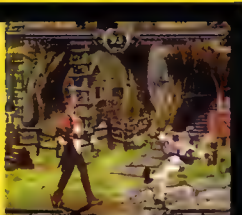
.hack//Infection	Bandai	The world's first MMORPG, but this time the 0 stands for "offline." Comes packed with a DVD of the animated series.	7
.hack//Mutation	Bandai	We've exhausted our supply of "something within a something" jokes, so just know that the series starts to pick up in this sequel.	8
Amplitude	Sony	A whole slew of new artists who, naturally, bring along brand-new tunes for your button-pressing pleasure.	8
ATV Offroad Fury	Sony	The key to being a successful ATV offroader lies in launching yourself through the air as often as possible. A fun and floaty racer.	9
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance	Interplay	A beautiful-looking <i>Dungeons & Dragons</i> -based hack-and-slash that can be played cooperatively with another player.	8
Breath of Fire: Dragon Quarter	Capcom	An RPG that forces you to die and start over multiple times? It sounds ridiculous, but it actually works.	8
Burnout 2: Point of Impact	Acclaim	An aggressive driving simulator that defies the rules of physics. Includes a dedicated Crash mode for aspiring demolition-derby stars.	8
Capcom vs. SNK 2	Capcom	Take the best elements of <i>Street Fighter</i> and <i>King of Fighters</i> , and you'll have the best thing going in the world of 2D combat.	8
Colin McRae Rally 3	Codemasters	A superb rally racer with superrealistic properties—right down to the extended time you spend sitting in the Ford Focus.	8
Contra: Shattered Soldier	Konami	After numerous shoddy attempts to bring the classic <i>Contra</i> gameplay to a next-gen system, Konami finally gets it right.	9
Crazy Taxi	Acclaim	As good as opening your PlayStation 2, rigging Dreamcast hardware inside, and then loading up a DC build of <i>Crazy Taxi</i> .	8
Dance Dance Revolution: DDRMax	Konami	Before, if you wanted to play <i>DDR</i> , you had to subject yourself to Joe and Jane Public. Now, you can embarrass yourself at home.	8
Dark Cloud 2	Sony	Improves upon the first one in every way imaginable. Building and upgrading weapons to your liking is a blast.	9
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2	Acclaim	Before turning to Larry Flynt for inspiration, <i>XXX</i> was based on Dave Mirra, and it actually focused on—get this—biking.	8
Dead or Alive 2: Hardcore	Tecmo	Before the entire series went Xbox exclusive, Team Ninja's gang of jiggly grapplers found a temporary home on PS2.	8
Deus Ex: The Conspiracy	Eidos	One of the best PC games of 2000 is ported faithfully to PS2. Upgrade your character's skills and attributes as you see fit.	8
Devil May Cry	Capcom	Did you know <i>Devil May Cry</i> was going to be <i>Resident Evil 4</i> before it was spun off into its own series? Oh, you did? Never mind, then.	9
Dynasty Warriors 3	Koei	Melee combat set to the history of ancient China. Enemies number in the hundreds along branching story paths.	8
Escape from Monkey Island	Sony Online	LucasArts has a fine tradition of putting out excellent graphical adventure games, and this latest charmer is no exception.	9
EverQuest Online Adventures	LucasArts	PS2 owners finally get to see what the whole <i>EverQuest</i> thing is about—and will never be seen again.	8
F1 2002	EA Sports	Minor refinements over the 2001 version may not be enough to justify the upgrade, but it's still a solid <i>F1</i> game.	8
Final Fantasy X	Square EA	The PS2's first <i>Final Fantasy</i> does away the traditional overworld, but introduces full voice acting. Artistically beautiful, as always.	9
The Getaway	Sony	Opinions vary wildly on this British-themed gangster (not gangsta) game. Even the British can't agree!	8
Gran Turismo 3 A-spec	Sony	Core gameplay is unchanged, but the graphics get a complete overhaul, which makes <i>GT3</i> the best-playing/looking sim on the market.	10
Grand Theft Auto III	Rockstar Games	A phenomenon of both gameplay and sales. A free-roaming interactive mobster film that's sold more than 8 million copies to date.	10
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City	Rockstar Games	As bad boy Tommy Vercetti, there's something indescribably cool about cruising Vice City's beach strip while rocking to "Billie Jean."	10
Guilty Gear XX	Sony	Tired of waiting for <i>Street Fighter 4</i> ? This one should more than compensate. Great visuals, great control, and great extras.	8
Half-Life	Sierra	After it was cancelled for Dreamcast, a console version of this PC classic didn't seem very likely. But here we are.	8
Harvest Moon: Save the Homeland	Natsume	It's a farming simulator. It's fun. These two statements may seem wildly incongruous, but somehow, <i>Harvest Moon</i> makes it work.	8
High Heat 2004	3DO	The best ball-game available this year. "Simulation" doesn't seem like a strong enough word to describe it.	9
Hitman 2	Eidos	Most of the problems with the original <i>Hitman</i> have been fixed, making this one of the more rewarding action games on PS2.	9
Hot Shots Golf 3	Sony	Some golf games need something extra to attract gamers. How about arcade-style control, annoying taunts, and multiplayer modes?	9
Ico	Sony	An underappreciated work of art with challenging puzzles, fantastic lighting, and engrossing character relationships.	9
Jade Cocoon 2	Ubi Soft	A notable improvement over its predecessor, with the equally addictive feature of monster breeding.	8
Jak and Daxter: The Precursor Legacy	Sony	The studio that gave birth to <i>Crash Bandicoot</i> brings a couple new mascots and a gorgeous new 3D world to PS2.	8
Jet X20	Sony	More extreme-sports fun, but this time, it's all wet. Finishing is only half the battle; performing tricks factors into the final standings.	8
Kingdom Hearts	Square EA	When the amazing, talented artists from Square join forces with the amazing, talented artists from Disney, good things happen.	8
Klonoa 2: Lunavea's Veil	Namco	<i>Klonoa</i> became a rare find in the later days of PlayStation. The outstanding sequel looks to share the same fate. Grab it if you can.	8
Le Mans 24 Hours	Infogrames	There's an option to play the famous endurance race true-to-life: 24 hours straight of driving. Better stock up on Mountain Dew.	8
The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers	EA Games	Anything bearing the valuable <i>Lord of the Rings</i> license will sell well. Happily, there's more to this beat-em-up than just the name.	8
Madden NFL 2003	EA Sports	The series' first foray into online console gaming is a success. Everything you love about <i>Madden</i> can now be shared with strangers.	9
The Mark of Kri	Sony	A slick action game with innovative controls: Each button is assigned to a different enemy, allowing for combat with multiple targets.	8
Maximo: Ghosts to Glory	Capcom	It's the spiritual successor to the classic <i>Ghosts 'n' Goblins</i> , complete with heart boxers and insane difficulty.	8
MDK 2 Armageddon	Interplay	Much improved over the original Dreamcast incarnation, <i>MDK 2 Armageddon</i> is one of the better recent action games.	8
Medal of Honor: Frontline	Electronic Arts	A strong single-player campaign paves the way through the beaches of Normandy and the heart of France. Great audio.	8
Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance	Konami	There's a lot in this update: 350 VR missions, 150 alternate missions, five Snake Tales, and one skateboard. Yes, a skateboard.	9
Midnight Club 2	Rockstar Games	Rockstar's rebellious racer is now online, but you'd better practice mastering the game's controls before entering competition.	8
Mobile Suit Gundam: Federation vs. Zeon	Bandai	Giant robots are great, but basing them on the <i>Gundam</i> license with Capcom developing makes them greater, if that's even possible.	8
MotoGP 3	Namco	After three attempts, Namco got it right...sort of. The realism is astounding, as long as you ignore the giant Mr. Driller.	8
NASCAR Thunder 2003	EA Sports	Hate turning left for hours? NASCAR games probably aren't your thing. But if you get it, <i>Thunder 2003</i> should be right up your alley.	9

TITLE	PUBLISHER	WHAT WE SAY	GMR RATING
NBA 2K3	Sega Sports	Yet another compelling reason to own a PS2 Network Adaptor, <i>NBA2K3</i> is the best-playing game of hoops on the system.	9
NBA Live 2003	EA Sports	An improvement over previous versions, with a heavier focus on the faster-paced aspects of the game as opposed to a true simulation.	8
NBA Street Vol. 2	Electronic Arts	Even better than the first, <i>Vol. 2</i> takes you through the legendary players and teams of the NBA's storied history. A great deal of fun.	9
NCAA Football 2003	EA Sports	A lot like <i>Madden</i> , only with exploited college kids and marching bands. It's also the best college football game available.	9
Need For Speed: Hot Pursuit 2	EA Games	Strangely, the game's best version is on the least-powerful hardware. Running from cops has never been this fun, or consequence free.	9
NFL 2K3	Sega Sports	Sega's latest football effort compares nicely to the firmly entrenched <i>Madden</i> juggernaut, and even beats it in some areas.	8
NFL Blitz 20-02	Midway	So you like football games but don't care for playcalling strategy, formations, and clock management? <i>Blitz</i> has been here for years.	9
NHL 2002	Electronic Arts	Hockey is played on ice, with six men trying to put a puck into the other team's goal. This is a good digital representation of that sport.	9
NHL 2K3	Sega Sports	For the more discerning hockey connoisseur, <i>NHL2K3</i> has made great strides since its debut on the now-defunct Dreamcast.	9
Onimusha 2: Samurai's Destiny	Capcom	The effort put forward in defeating Nobunga in <i>Onimusha</i> has gone to waste, as he's risen from the dead and is appearing in the sequel.	8
Onimusha: Warlords	Capcom	Survival-horror with a taste for feudal Japan, gorgeous artistic design, and a whole lot more action than its <i>Resident Evil</i> kin.	8
RAD: Robot Alchemic Drive	Enix	It's hard to go wrong with giant robots blowing stuff up, but Enix's latest effort goes one step further with a novel control scheme.	8
Ratchet & Clank	Sony	Insomniac's terrific action-platformer has you jumping from world to world in search of new weapons and gadgets.	8
Rayman 2: Revolution	Ubi Soft	One of the best 3D platformers available, the <i>Rayman</i> franchise doesn't get the attention it deserves: It's good, and you should buy it.	9
Red Faction	THQ	A first-person shooter that features destructible environments, drivable vehicles, and a strong single-player campaign.	9
Resident Evil Code: Veronica X	Capcom	More of a true sequel than <i>Resident Evil 3</i> , its Dreamcast debut meant many fans missed out. Problem solved!	8
Rez	Sega	A fairly standard shooter dressed as a visual and aural masterpiece. Sadly unappreciated by the vast majority of the gaming world.	8
Ridge Racer V	Namco	The always enjoyable <i>Ridge Racer</i> series scores well, thanks to solid control, an enthralling sense of speed, and a fitting soundtrack.	9
Rumble Racing	Electronic Arts	This fun arcade racer originally started out with the NASCAR license, but it was dropped in favor of original designs.	8
Rygar: The Legendary Adventure	Tecmo	This Greek mythology-based action game is an update of the arcade and NES classic in name only. Fun combat and great music.	9
Sega Sports Tennis	Sega	Arcade-style tennis perfection when it launched for Dreamcast. It's holding up just as well on PS2.	8
Silent Hill 2	Konami	More creepy than downright scary, the <i>Silent Hill</i> series takes a more sophisticated, cerebral approach to the survival-horror genre.	8
The Sims	Electronic Arts	A new mode helps you figure out how to keep your Sim from pissing himself. Or, if you're like that, how to make him do it.	9
Sky Gunner	Attlus	If you can look past the slowdown issue (and it can be a pretty big issue at times), <i>Sky Gunner</i> is great shooting fun.	8
Sky Odyssey	Activision	A flight game that channels the spirit of <i>Pilotwings</i> , with mission-based gameplay and a large array of aircraft to pilot.	8
Sly Cooper and the Thievius Raccoonus	Sony	A solid platformer with a unique aesthetic and animations. Lacks a little in the challenge department; it's a little on the short side, too.	8
Smuggler's Run	Rockstar Games	In keeping with Rockstar's games, <i>Smuggler's Run</i> indulges the inner criminal in all of us.	8
SOCOM: U.S. Navy SEALs	Sony	Possibly the the best reason to own a PS2 Network Adaptor. The team-based military tactics work better online than off.	9
Splinter Cell	Ubi Soft	As expected, the PS2 port of the Xbox original takes a graphical hit. Doesn't mean it's not still a great game, though.	9
Spy Hunter	Midway	A re-creation of the classic that manages to avoid tarnishing all the good memories, which can't be said for a lot of "classic" remakes.	8
SSX	Electronic Arts	A surprisingly good snowboarder with over-the-top stunts and great course design; it stands out as one of the better PS2 launch titles.	9
SSX Tricky	Electronic Arts	<i>SSX Tricky</i> boasts a new set of insane gravity-defying and physically impossible stunts, not to mention all-new tracks and characters.	8
Sub Rebellion	Metro3D	Customizable submarines rule the waters of the future; <i>Sub Rebellion</i> is an action game that's short on graphics but very entertaining.	8
Tekken Tag Tournament	Namco	Essentially <i>Tekken 3</i> with enhanced graphics and a tag-teaming. Which isn't bad, considering <i>Tekken 3</i> is a great game to begin with.	8
Tenchu: Wrath of Heaven	Activision	<i>Tenchu</i> sneaked onto the list without us noticing. We were drunk on sake and telling tales of heroism, so that might be why.	8
Theme Park Roller Coaster	Electronic Arts	<i>Sim City</i> meets <i>Six Flags</i> . Design your own dangerous rollercoasters without fear of getting slapped with wrongful-death lawsuits.	8
TimeSplitters 2	Eidos	Everything good about the original is here, with loads of new multiplayer options, including maps, weapons, and game modes, too.	8
Tokyo Xtreme Racer Zero	Crave	Cruise Tokyo's highways in search of less-than-legal street-racing action. Despite some visual issues, it's definitely worth checking out.	8
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4	Activision	Neversoft dropped the two-minute time limit in Career mode and added an array of objectives. Level design is a step up from <i>THPS3</i> .	9
Twisted Metal: Black	Sony	With the franchise safely out of the hands of 989 Studios, <i>Twisted Metal</i> makes a welcome return to its former, gruesome glory.	9
Twisted Metal: Black Online	Sony	If you buy a PS2 Network Adaptor, you get it for free. Which kind of makes sense, considering you can't play it without one.	8
Virtua Fighter 4	Sega	The <i>Virtua Fighter</i> series has always been finely crafted, and this version is no exception. The depth of this game is staggering.	10
War of the Monsters	SCEA	King Kong's agent wanted a cool \$20 mil for this fun beat-em-up, but Sony balked and went with the less-recognizable Congar.	9
Wild Arms 3	Sony	A grand adventure with a Wild West theme, endearing characters, great music, and a refreshingly uncomplicated battle system.	8
Wipeout Fusion	Bam	The Designer's Republic touch may be missing, but the series' oft-imitated, never surpassed style of racing remains intact.	8
World Series Baseball 2K3	Sega	<i>WSB2K3</i> is the best-looking baseball game with a great Franchise mode, but it's got A.I. issues that need to be worked out.	8
World Soccer: Winning Eleven 6	Konami	Feet down, the most natural-feeling soccer game ever. It lacks FIFA's presentation and licenses, but makes up for it in gameplay.	9
WWF SmackDown!: Just Bring It	THQ	Even if this game scored a zero, it would still sell a truckload of copies. Such is the marketing power of Vince McMahon & family.	8
Xenosaga	Namco	A massive RPG of epic story and length. Namco's now in charge of the <i>Xeno</i> series, and this is the first of many planned chapters.	9
Zone of the Enders: The 2nd Runner	Konami	Better enemies, better pacing, better music, better stages, and better weapons. What we're trying to say is, <i>ZOE2</i> is better than the first.	8

[BUY!]

GUILTY GEAR XX

➔ Tired of waiting for the *Street Fighter* franchise to revive? Maybe you should look into *Guilty Gear XX*, with frantic-yet-controlled combat and some of the best-looking 2D artwork, animation, and special effects we've ever seen. There are 20 characters in all, and an addictive Challenge mode.



[AVOID!]

KING OF ROUTE 66

➔ Just like its predecessor, *18 Wheeler*: short, shallow, and frustrating. A new feature lets you upgrade your rig by completing various missions on your journey across America, but why bother wasting precious time when you could be watching *Smokey & The Bandit*?



PC TOP 50 LOOKING FOR FREELANCERS

PC

Aliens vs. Predator 2	Sierra	Three completely different first-person shooters combined into one dark and terrifying gaming experience.	9
Baldur's Gate II: Shadows of Amn	Interplay	The rare occasion when the sequel to a classic goes above and beyond its predecessor. Can't wait for III.	9
Black & White	EA Games	Highly conceptual "god-game" that has you ruling over mortals with a little help from a giant cow-monster.	8
Battlefield 1942	EA Games	Multiplayer shooter set in WWII that lets you jump in and out of vehicles (even planes!) while battling dozens of your friends.	9
Civilization III	Infogrames	Sid Meier's classic just keeps rolling along, getting bigger and more complex while somehow managing to remain just as addictive.	10
Commandos 2	Eidos	Control a squad of elite commandos in WWII as they infiltrate, detonate, and assassinate across multiple battlefields.	8
Diablo II: Lords of Destruction	Blizzard	The sequel to the ultimate dungeon-crawling clickfest should please anyone who wasted their teens playing the first game.	8
Dungeon Siege	Microsoft	Hack and slash doesn't have to be complicated. Sometimes, it can even be in beautiful 3D with no loading time between levels.	8
Enemy Engaged: Comanche v. Hokum	Empire Int.	Extremely realistic chopper sim that's not for the weak of heart or impatient of trigger finger.	9
EverQuest	Sony Online	The massively multiplayer RPG that's so addictive, it makes crack look like Sanka. Play this game at your own risk.	9
EverQuest: Scars of Velious	Sony Online	The expansion pack to EverCrack opens up new worlds, new characters, and tigers with boobies (finally!).	9
F1 2002	EA Sports	Delivers authentic yet accessible Formula One racing enjoyment for every open-wheel racing fan out there.	9
Fallout Tactics	Interplay	Squad-based tactical strategy game set in the same universe as the classic <i>Fallout</i> RPG that sets a new standard.	9
Freedom Force	EA Games	Clever use of strategy and RPG elements help make this witty comic book superhero-themed game one of the best.	10
Freelancer	Microsoft	It's not as simtastic as some might expect a PC space-shooter to be, but that's part of its charm. Random missions keep the fun going.	8
Ghost Recon: Island Thunder	Ubi Soft	This top-notch mission pack makes a decent modern combat simulation into an outstanding one.	8
Giants: Citizen Kabuto	Interplay	A shooter/strategy hybrid full of weird British humor, unique and beautiful 3D graphics, and naked lady sea monsters.	9
Grand Prix 4	Infogrames	It's a tough choice for Formula One fans; <i>GP4</i> and <i>F1 2002</i> are both worthy of your hard-earned dollars.	9
Grand Theft Auto III	Rockstar Games	The poster child for all that's wrong in gaming is chock full of all that's fun in gaming. And you get to import your own MP3s.	10
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin	Eidos	An almost-perfect blend of action and stealth, it's a humongous improvement over the first game.	9
IL-2 Sturmovik	Ubi Soft	Amazingly realistic WWII flight sim covering a region seldom visited in computer games: the Eastern Front	9
Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast	LucasArts	Yeah, the lightsaber battles are sweet, but Lando's cameo just about seals the deal. And is his ship fly or what?	9
Kohans: Ahirman's Gift	Strategy First	Surprisingly accessible fantasy-themed real-time strategy that's as much fun in single player as it is against other mages online.	9
Madden NFL 2003	EA Sports	Finally as good as all the superior console football games out there, this one is a gridiron classic on the PC.	9
Max Payne	G.O.D.	Despite some corny writing, this überhip noir videogame feels like a movie, but plays like a great action game.	8
Medal of Honor: Allied Assault	EA Games	Worth it just for the incredibly intense D-Day mission that almost matches the same scene in <i>Saving Private Ryan</i> .	9
Medieval: Total War	Activision	The ultimate historical strategy game has everything from political intrigue to sweeping real-time battles.	9
Microsoft Flight Simulator 2002	Microsoft	The definitive civilian flight simulator. So authentic, actual airline pilots use it to keep their skills sharp.	9
The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind	Bethesda	The definitive, open-ended RPG epic. Sort of like <i>GTA3</i> , but with magic and Elves and all that <i>D&D</i> flava.	9
Motorcross Madness 2	Microsoft	It's mud-splattering, off-road supercross fun with this free-wheeling dirtbike simulator from the makers of <i>ATV Offroad Fury</i> .	9
Myth III: The Wolf Age	G.O.D.	Bungie's renowned magical real-time strategy title goes 3D and maintains its fantastic multiplayer reputation.	8
NASCAR Racing 2003	Vivendi Universal	It's the final installment of the series, and it's also the best. There's not much new, but everything's been tweaked to near-perfection.	9
NASCAR Racing 4	Vivendi Universal	Superior simulation of the nail-biting sport of stock racing, with amazingly realistic physics matched by a sublime 3D engine.	9
Neverwinter Nights	Infogrames	If you're a <i>D&D</i> nerd, then you already know, but buy this one especially for the multiplayer and user-made mods.	9
No One Lives Forever	Vivendi Universal	Austin Powers ain't got nothing on Cate Archer, the hottest digital chick with a gun since that old hag Lara Croft.	9
No One Lives Forever 2	Vivendi Universal	As funny and stylish as the original '60s spy spoof (if that's even possible) and more fun to play, too.	9
Operation Flashpoint: Cold War Crisis	Codemasters	The first in the highly original series of combat sims, this soldier/flight/tank sim went on to win CGW's 2001 Game of the Year award.	9
Operation Flashpoint: Red Hammer	Codemasters	Letting you play as the bad guys is the sure way into our hearts. Especially when they're nasty Rooskies.	9
Operation Flashpoint: Resistance	Codemasters	Features and content worthy of a brand-new game, this is a benchmark expansion for a classic overlooked game.	9
Rainbow Six 3: Raven Shield	Ubi Soft	The command interface and character A.I. have been revamped, but it runs slowly on anything but a high-end rig.	8
Sacrifice	Interplay	Action/strategy hybrid defies the conventions of all the genres it touches, while making for a fantastically original multiplayer experience.	8
Serious Sam	G.O.D.	Brainless running and gunning is an underappreciated way to waste a couple hours with a great-looking game.	8
Sid Meier's Sim Golf	EA Games	<i>Sim Golf</i> will have you laying out golf courses and building resorts like a virtual Robert Trent Jones.	8
The Sims	EA Games	It's impossible to categorize EA's addictive superblockbuster life simulator, just like it's impossible to stop playing it.	10
The Sims: Hot Date	EA Games	Gamers everywhere, rejoice! Finally, a game where you can actually learn a thing or two about interacting with the opposite sex!	10
The Sims: House Party	EA Games	Get your soiree (not to mention your freak) on with this great addition to <i>The Sims'</i> amazing stable of add-on packs.	8
The Sims Online	EA Games	If you were merely a <i>Sims</i> addict before, all hope is now lost. All the world's a stage, and your online <i>Sim</i> persona can play any part.	9
The Sims: Unleashed	EA Games	Not just a great addition to EA's behemoth franchise, an essential one. Everyone needs a dog, or maybe a monkey.	9
Unreal II: The Awakening	Infogrames	Somewhat of a letdown in terms of story and gameplay, but good nonetheless. Call us in five years when our gaming rigs can handle it.	8
Warlords Battlecry II	Ubi Soft	RTS and RPG, two great flavors that go great together—especially when stirred together with a big gnarly wizard's staff!	8

[BUY!]

THIEF II: THE METAL AGE

➔ If you think *Metal Gear Solid* invented the stealth-shooter, you should see how PC gamers have been getting their sneak on for years in what many have called "the thinking-man's shooter." Not killing people was never so much fun.



[AVOID!]

FARSCAPE

➔ Licensed crap alert: Stay away from *Farscape's* sloppy combat and confusing cast of characters. It's the type of game that only appeals to fans of the show—people, if you'll excuse us for saying so, who kind of frighten us.



➔ XBOX TOP 50 EVEN MORE MONEY FOR TOM CLANCY

Apex	Atari	This racer is fantastic to look at and plays well enough to sit snugly between <i>Project Gotham Racing</i> and <i>Gran Turismo</i> on your shelf.	8
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance	Vivendi Universal	A beautiful-looking <i>Dungeons & Dragons</i> -based hack-and-slash that can be played cooperatively with another player.	8
Blinx: The Time Sweeper	Microsoft	This green-eyed feline can control the flow of time, but puzzles designed around that concept are lacking. Great idea, flawed execution.	7
Blood Omen 2	Eidos	The <i>Legacy of Kain</i> story picks up where the original <i>Blood Omen</i> left off, with you in control of the evil-yet-likeable vampire Kain.	8
Burnout	Acclaim	An arcade racer with an emphasis on spectacular crashes, which—now that we think about it—defeats the purpose of competitive racing.	8
Cel Damage	Microsoft	Crazy cartoon car combat with great use of cel-shading and varied multiplayer options. It can quickly become repetitive, however.	8
Colin McRae Rally 3	Codemasters	Everybody's favorite rally racer, Colin McRae, has a brand-new game featuring finely tuned physics and car damage.	8
Crazy Taxi 3: High Roller	Sega	It's hard to improve upon the original, but that didn't stop Sega from trying. Twice. The setting is new, but it plays pretty much the same.	8
Dead or Alive 3	Tecmo	It's not the deepest of fighters, but it definitely competes for the best-looking prize. Plus, the girls are back in all their bouncy glory.	8
Dead or Alive: Xtreme Beach Volleyball	Tecmo	Pro tip: When playing <i>DOAX</i> , have your TV remote close by. If Morn bursts in, hit the surf button and flip to the History Channel. She'll be proud.	8
Dial Frame	Tecmo	It's creepy. It's gory. It's the Tecmo game without the boobs. Another of those games better enjoyed with the lights off.	8
Genma Onimusha	Capcom	An enhanced port of the PS2 game, <i>Genma Onimusha</i> adds improved graphics, available 5.1 audio output, and a new type of soul energy.	7
Halo	Microsoft	The definitive reason to own an Xbox. There are plenty of secondary reasons, sure, but no Xbox owner should be without <i>Halo</i> .	10
High Heat 2004	3DO	The best ball-game available this year. "Simulation" doesn't seem like a strong enough word to describe it.	9
James Bond 007: NightFire	EA Games	<i>GoldenEye</i> set an impossibly high standard for the Bond license, but <i>NightFire</i> does an admirable job of re-creating the feel of the films.	8
Jet Set Radio Future	Sega	<i>Jet Set Radio Future</i> has substance and an overabundance of style. Sega simplified tagging in favor of a more robust trick system.	8
Madden NFL 2002	Electronic Arts	It's a crowded genre on Xbox, with three different franchises competing for your attention. <i>Madden</i> is always a safe bet.	9
Max Payne	Rockstar Games	The "bullet time" effect is the big draw of this action/shooter. Inspired by Hong Kong action flicks, set against a gritty New York City.	8
MechAssault	Microsoft	It's a good single-player game, but it really shines on Xbox Live, where you're pitted against other mech pilots.	8
Medal of Honor: Frontline	EA Games	A strong single-player campaign paves the way across the beaches of Normandy and through the heart of France. Great audio.	8
Metal Gear Solid 2: Substance	Konami	Includes the original <i>MGS2: Sons of Liberty</i> , five brand-new missions featuring Solid Snake, and a slew of challenging VR missions.	9
 MotoGP 2	THQ	What we said: "Can only be described as the best motorcycle-racing sim on the planet." What more do you need?	9
NASCAR Thunder 2003	EA Sports	Hate driving left for hours? NASCAR games probably aren't your thing. But if you "get it," <i>Thunder 2003</i> should be right up your alley.	9
NBA 2K3	Sega Sports	Yet another compelling reason to sign up for Xbox Live, <i>NBA2K3</i> is the best-playing game of hoops on the system.	9
NBA Live 2003	EA Sports	An improvement over previous versions, with a heavier focus on the faster-paced aspects of the game as opposed to a true simulation.	8
NBA Street Vol. 2	Electronic Arts	Even better than the first, Vol. 2 takes you through the legendary players and teams of the NBA's storied history. A great deal of fun.	9
NCAA College Basketball 2K3	Sega	We're secretly hoping next year's version features an NCAA Rules Infraction mode. Think of the possibilities...	8
NFL 2K3	Sega	Sega's latest football effort compares nicely to the firmly entrenched <i>Madden</i> juggernaut, and even beats it in some areas.	9
NHL Hitz 20-02	Midway	<i>NHL Hitz</i> rhymes with <i>NFL Blitz</i> . That's no mere coincidence. Hockey with no rules is just as fun as its lawless football counterpart.	8
Oddworld: Munch's Oddysee	Microsoft	Originally destined for PS2, the now-Xbox exclusive <i>Munch's Oddysee</i> is a clever action/puzzle game with a great deal of character.	7
Panzer Dragoon Orta	Sega	Aesthetically beautiful and a dream to play. See what Saturn owners were enjoying seven years ago (the original <i>Panzer Dragoon</i> is included).	8
Phantom Crash	Phantagram	The Xbox certainly isn't lacking in mech titles. The quirky, unique <i>Phantom Crash</i> has upgradable mechs and a story-driven 1P mode.	9
Project Gotham Racing	Microsoft	The refinement of the Kudos point system is the biggest difference between <i>Project Gotham</i> and its Dreamcast predecessor.	8
RalliSport Challenge	Microsoft	This rally racer is one of the best examples of the Xbox's power. More arcade than simulation, with enough depth to please both camps.	8
Robotech: Battlery	TDK Mediactive	Cel-shaded graphics effectively capture the look and feel of the classic 1980s cartoon. Especially enjoyable for fans of the series.	8
Rocky	Ubi Soft	The best boxing game you can get for your Xbox. A technical knock-out, considering there's not much competition.	8
Sega GT 2002	Sega	Sega's answer to the <i>Gran Turismo</i> phenomenon. Not quite as expansive in terms of tracks and cars, but better with the details.	8
Shenmue II	Microsoft	The second chapter of Yu Suzuki's opus sees our hero Ryo traversing the streets of Hong Kong in search of his father's killer.	7
Silent Hill 2: Restless Dreams	Konami	A creepy port of a creepy game with a creepy bonus: a creepy extra episode of the creepy story. Play without lights for extra creepiness.	8
Star Wars Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast	LucasArts	As usual, the <i>Star Wars</i> universe inspires great aesthetic design to compliment Raven Software's solid sense of game design.	8
Steel Battalion	Capcom	If you want to play this game, you'll have to shell out \$200 for the massive controller. For those with the cash, it's well worth it.	8
Test Drive	Atari	Race for pink slips on the underground circuit, and live out your Vin Diesel role-playing fantasy. Or just act normal and race cars.	8
The Elder Scrolls III: Morrowind	Bethesda	An exhaustive open-ended RPG that essentially allows you to make it up as you go along, with hundreds of people to talk to.	8
Timesplitters 2	Eidos	Everything good about the [PS2] original is here, with loads of new multiplayer options including maps, weapons, and game modes.	8
ToeJam & Earl III	Sega	Toe Jam and Earl haven't seen much action lately, but the funk is strong this time, and it's better to enjoy funk with a partner. Oh yeah.	7
Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	Ubi Soft	There's not much of a graphical upgrade from the PC version, but the interface and audio are improved. Goes great with Xbox Live.	8
Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell	Ubi Soft	Comparisons to <i>Metal Gear Solid</i> were inevitable. <i>Splinter Cell</i> holds its own, and even outdoes Konami's behemoth at times.	9
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	Activision	If you have to have <i>Tony Hawk 3</i> , improved graphics and framerate and the custom soundtrack option make this the best version to get.	9
Unreal Championship	Atari	Mindless deathmatching with great weapon design and entertaining multiplayer modes, including the sport-like Bombing Run.	8
World Series Baseball 2K3	Sega Sports	<i>WSB2K3</i> is the best-looking baseball game and it has a great Franchise mode, but it's got A.I. issues that still need to be worked out.	8

[BUY!]

HALO

➔ By the time you read this, E3 will be over and we'll have seen our first glimpse of a playable *Halo 2*. This sort of thing usually prompts us to get nostalgic about the first game and play it all over again. We suggest you do the same.



[AVOID!]

RUN LIKE HELL

➔ An interesting action game that's unfortunately plagued by a terrible camera. It's slightly improved over the PS2 version, but still a pain to play. You don't necessarily have to run away, walking at a brisk pace should do fine.



→ GAMECUBE TOP 50 MONKEYS OPEN FOR BUSINESS

All-Star Baseball 2004	Acclaim	The graphics keep getting better each year, but the gameplay isn't keeping pace. Nice presentation, but the batting interface needs work.	7
Animal Crossing	Nintendo	The game that never ends is based largely on routine chores, yard work, and interior decorating. So why is it so much fun to play?	9
Beach Spikers	Sega	Easy to pick up and easy to play, like <i>Virtua Tennis</i> . As with most arcade sports games, it's definitely better as a multiplayer affair.	8
Bomberman Generation	Majesco	A surviving member of the Old School, <i>Bomberman</i> has earned some tenure in the industry. This time, he sports a cel-shaded look.	8
Burnout 2: Point of Impact	Acclaim	The best-looking—and best-playing—racer on the system. Be prepared to spend many hours in Crash mode.	8
Cubivore	Atlus	A simple but compelling game of reproduction and cannibalism. Plus, you can get "hump points." You know you're interested.	7
Dark Summit	THQ	It's snowboarding set against some sort of nonsense about a secret government plot. The important part is that it's snowboarding.	7
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2	Acclaim	Before turning to Larry Flynt for inspiration, <i>XXX</i> was based on the well-mannered Dave Mirra and actually focused on—get this—biking.	8
Eternal Darkness: Sanity's Requiem	Nintendo	This game, if you let it, will mess with your head. The insanity effects are clever (the first time) and the scenery is downright creepy.	8
FIFA 2002	Electronic Arts	Though there's always room for improvement, EA's soccer series has been fairly decent. Plus, there's no real alternative yet.	7
Godzilla: Destroy All Monsters Melee	Atari	<i>Godzilla & Co.</i> wrecking cityscapes and each other, with support for up to four players. What's not to like?	7
Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets	EA Games	This Potter kid seems to be pretty popular, so the folks at EA decided to make a <i>Zelda</i> -esque adventure based on his magical exploits.	7
High Heat 2004	3DO	The best ball-game available this year. "Simulation" doesn't seem like a strong enough word to describe it.	9
The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker	Nintendo	It looks and feels like the best <i>Zelda</i> game ever, but sailing back and forth in the overworld just feels like work.	9
Lost Kingdoms	Activision	GameCube's first RPG, featuring fast-paced battles, a multiplayer mode, and a well-designed card system. Worth checking out.	7
Luigi's Mansion	Nintendo	We all wanted Mario at launch, and we got this. Like getting socks for Christmas, it's good and comfortable, but not what we wanted.	7
Madden NFL 2002	Electronic Arts	Those who bought the GameCube version instead of the PS2 edition were treated to roughly the same game. Good for them, though.	9
Mario Party 4	Nintendo	There are few things better in life than three friends, <i>Mario Party</i> , and a healthy flow of alcoholic beverages (if you're legal, of course).	8
Medal of Honor: Frontline	EA Games	A new story of D-Day and the ensuing action on the French front lines. The GameCube version has a multiplayer mode the others don't.	7
Metroid Prime	Nintendo	As if they dissected <i>Super Metroid</i> , added a dimension, and put it back together again with slick graphics. In fact, it's exactly like that.	10
MLB Slugfest 20-04	Midway	What <i>Blitz</i> is to football, <i>Slugfest</i> is to baseball. If you can't sit through nine innings of the regular game, this one's for you.	7
NASCAR Thunder 2003	EA Games	It's apparently the fastest growing "sport" in America, and <i>Thunder 2003</i> is packed under the hood, including an in-depth Career mode.	9
NBA 2K2	Sega	More of a sim than <i>NBA Courtside</i> , but it's the best basketball simulation available. Includes a great game of street ball, too.	9
NBA 2K3	Sega	Added to this year's version is a slick ESPN interface, an upgraded Franchise mode, and a fresh class of rookies.	9
NBA Courtside	Nintendo	No longer under the Nintendo development umbrella, Left Field's final installment of the <i>Courtside</i> series is a worthy b-ball game.	8
NBA Street Vol. 2	EA Sports	Even better than the first, Vol. 2 takes you through the legendary players and teams of the NBA's storied history. A great deal of fun.	9
NCAA College Basketball 2K3	Sega	We're secretly hoping next year's version features an NCAA Rules Infraction mode. Think of the possibilities...	8
Pac-Man World 2	Namco	Purists will yell "HERESY!" at the new Pac-Man who can take multiple hits. People who actually enjoy good games will ignore them.	7
Phantasy Star Online Episode I & II	Sega	Unhealthily addictive. The pursuit of rare items helps one ignore the somewhat repetitive battle (and the \$9 monthly fee).	9
Pikmin	Nintendo	<i>Mario</i> creator Shigeru Miyamoto got the idea for this quirky strategy game from observing his personal garden. What kind of garden?	8
Resident Evil	Capcom	This remake could almost be described as a new game. But is it really <i>Resident Evil</i> without the laughably bad voice acting?	9
Resident Evil 0	Capcom	This one actually is a brand-new game, with significant changes such as droppable items and the dirty-sounding partner-swapping.	8
Sega Soccer Slam	Sega	An arcade-style soccer game with off-the-wall characters, arenas, and power-ups. And it's still better than <i>Virtua Striker</i> !	8
Skies of Arcadia: Legend	Sega	If you missed it on Dreamcast—and many of you did—you've been given a second chance. It's even got new characters.	8
Smuggler's Run: Warzones	Rockstar Games	An enhanced version of <i>Smuggler's Run 2</i> , with new vehicles and maps and an expanded multiplayer mode with support for four players.	8
Sonic Adventure 2: Battle	Sega	Remember when you and your friends held daily Sonic vs. Mario debates? Don't you feel silly now? Or at least a little old?	7
Sonic Adventure DX	Sega	SA2 got an upgrade, while the original <i>Adventure</i> ...uh, gets a bunch of old Game Gear games. Still a classic worth revisiting, though.	7
Sonic Mega Collection	Sega	Sure, the <i>Sonic</i> games were great, but \$40 may be too steep an asking price for a collection of old and unenhanced games.	7
Star Fox Adventures	Nintendo	Rare's last Nintendo effort took forever, but <i>Star Fox Adventures</i> takes its inspiration from <i>The Legend of Zelda</i> —and that ain't bad.	7
Star Wars Rogue Squadron II: Rogue Leader	LucasArts	At times, <i>Rogue Leader</i> synchs closely with scenes from the movies. Impressive when you consider it took only nine months to make.	9
Star Wars: The Clone Wars	LucasArts	All the intense action of the movie, without melodramatic writing and weak acting. As with many GC games, multiplayer is a big draw.	7
Super Mario Sunshine	Nintendo	Maybe not quite as groundbreaking as <i>Super Mario 64</i> was, but even when Nintendo "misses," it makes a big splash.	9
Super Monkey Ball	Sega	Monkeys in balls! An exceptional game based on a simple concept; some of the later levels will eat you for lunch.	8
Super Monkey Ball 2	Sega	Even more monkeys in balls running around for your entertainment! The extra game modes add quite a bit to the simple concept.	8
Super Smash Bros. Melee	Nintendo	A Nintendo fanatic's dream, if only for the exhaustive gallery of collectible Nintendo-rabilia. Plus, you can beat the crap out of Jigglypuff.	9
TimeSplitters 2	Eidos	Everything good about the original is here, with loads of new multiplayer options including maps, weapons, and game modes.	7
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	Activision	For those with the DualShock hardwired into their psyche, switching over to the oddly-shaped GameCube controller can prove difficult.	9
Wave Race: Blue Storm	Nintendo	Nintendo messed with the controls when they didn't need any messing with, making <i>Blue Storm</i> pale in comparison to its predecessor.	6
WWE Wrestlemania X8	THQ	Ratings have cooled and Stone Cold has had some run-ins with John Law, but that's irrelevant, as wrestling games will always sell.	8
X-Men: Next Dimension	Activision	If you absolutely must have an X-Men fighting game, this is your best bet. Better fighters exist, but they don't feature Wolverine.	7

[BUY!]

ROGUE SQUADRON II: ROGUE LEADER

➔ Seeing *Rogue Squadron II* in action has us hopping back in our snow speeders for one last run around Factor 5's graphical masterpiece. While *Hoth* retains a special place in our hearts, nothing tops the Battle of Endor.



[AVOID!]

BATMAN: DARK TOMORROW

➔ The overwhelming stench kept it from reaching our Reviews section, much to the relief of everyone involved with *GM*. Terrible camera, unplayable framerate...why is it so difficult to make a decent Batman game?



→ PS1 TOP 25 BEST SYSTEM EVER? IT'S ONE OF 'EM...

TITLE	PUBLISHER	WHAT WE SAY	GMR RATING
Castlevania: Symphony of the Night	Konami	Like <i>Super Metroid</i> , with vampires instead of Metroids. And it was on PlayStation. A certifiable classic.	9
Chrono Cross	Square EA	It wasn't quite the <i>Chrono Trigger</i> sequel most people expected, but it's a magnificent game in its own right.	10
Colin McRae Rally 2.0	Codemasters	Americans might be slow in recognizing the name, but race fans know the Colin McRae games were and are among the best.	9
Crash Team Racing	Sony	Countless mascot racers that flooded store shelves during the PlayStation era, and <i>Crash Team Racing</i> was the only good one. Really.	9
Einhandler	Sony	"Einhandler" is German for "awesome 2D shooter that should have sold way more than it did." That, or "one-handed." We're not sure.	9
Final Fantasy Anthology	Square EA	We're not exactly sure how two games out of a series of nine constitutes an "anthology," but they're good games nonetheless.	9
Final Fantasy IX	Square EA	The crystals return to the series, along with a four-member party, blue magic, and black mages. Biggs and Wedge, sadly, do not.	10
Final Fantasy VII	Sony	Brought RPGs into the U.S. spotlight and contained the most debated plot twist of an era. We won't spoil it, but no, you can't.	9
Final Fantasy VIII	Square EA	Things were more "real" this time around—as real as chocobos, guardian forces, and time compression could be, anyway.	9
Gran Turismo	Sony	Of course, it seems foolish now, but the replays had some of us doing double-takes to make sure we weren't watching real race footage.	9
Gran Turismo 2	Sony	More tracks, more cars, more races, more cars, more cars, more cars, more modes, and more cars. The second lap was even better than the first.	10
Madden NFL 2001	Electronic Arts	Don't call it a comeback, he's been here for years. Play a version of <i>Madden</i> in which the Rams could actually win with Kurt Warner.	9
Metal Gear Solid	Konami	Hideo Kojima's cinematic classic continues to impress, and its video was the first to unofficially win E3's Game of Show. Twice.	10
NFL GameDay '97	Sony	Helped to steal the football crown from <i>Madden</i> (only to fumble it right back a few years later).	9
NHL '98	Electronic Arts	A decent game of hockey, and one of the series' brighter spots. Played in college dorms throughout the country.	9
Oddworld: Abe's Exoddus	GT Interactive	An unlikely hero rises up to overthrow big business. It's very clever...and the political overtones are great for that last-minute term paper.	9
Point Blank	Namco	If <i>Time Crisis</i> taught us to be killers, then surely <i>Point Blank</i> taught us how to shoot up a car before it falls on us from 40 stories up.	9
Resident Evil 2	Capcom	Zombies running amok in Raccoon City; more B-movie voice acting running amok on your speakers. Enough to fill two discs this time!	9
Ridge Racer Type 4	Namco	Plenty of cars, silky-smooth graphics, and of all things, a Story mode. Best played with the Joystick controller.	9
Street Fighter Alpha 3	Capcom	Another well-executed arcade port and arguably the best version of <i>Street Fighter</i> to grace the system.	9
Tekken 3	Namco	An amazing conversion, given the difference between the arcade and PlayStation hardware at the time. Set the standard for bonuses.	10
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2	Activision	Some say it's the best installment of the series in terms of control, music, and course design. So do we, actually.	10
Twisted Metal 2	Sony	The granddaddy of vehicular combat games. Sweet Tooth is damning evidence that clowns and anything related to clowning is evil.	9
Worms Armageddon	Hasbro Int.	A highly addictive turn-based strategy game and a practical alternative to throwing grenades at the sidewalk after a rain shower.	9
You Don't Know Jack	Sierra	The ultimate judge of useless-yet-impressive knowledge, assuming you still can't find your <i>Star Wars</i> edition of <i>Trivial Pursuit</i> .	9

→ GBA TOP 25 WE'LL HAVE TO MAKE MORE ROOM...

GAME NAME	PUBLISHER	DESCRIPTION	GMR RATING
Advance Wars	Nintendo	Turn-based military strategy that should be a part of everyone's GBA library. Once you get sucked in, it's hard to pull yourself away.	8
Baseball Advance	THQ	There are only four stadiums and no multiplayer, but it's still a great game of baseball.	8
Castlevania: Circle of the Moon	Konami	<i>Castlevania</i> was meant to be played in two dimensions, and this game shows why. A complex card system governs your special abilities.	9
Castlevania: Harmony of Dissonance	Konami	The second <i>Castlevania</i> is one of the best reasons to own a Game Boy Advance. The colors are brighter and the bosses are bigger.	10
F-Zero Maximum Velocity	Nintendo	An enhanced port of the classic SNES racer with improved graphics and four-player support.	8
Golden Sun	Nintendo	A deep combat engine and brilliant graphics make this the best RPG available on GBA.	9
Golden Sun: The Lost Age	Nintendo	Picks up right where the first one lets off. The battle system remains basically unchanged, but puzzles are much more rewarding.	8
GT Advance Championship	THQ	A great-looking/playing racer with one major drawback: a tedious password save system. If you can get past that, well, good for you.	9
Kirby: Nightmare in Dream Land	Nintendo	A remake of the NES classic <i>Kirby's Adventure</i> with updated graphics and multiplayer support.	8
Klonoa: Empire of Dreams	Namco	Straying from the original formula, this <i>Klonoa</i> is more of a puzzle game than a platformer, with great graphics and sound.	8
Konami Crazy Racers	Konami	A <i>Mario Kart</i> -esque mascot racer filled with classic Konami characters like Dracula, Goemon, and MGS's Ninja.	9
Legend of Zelda: A Link to the Past	Nintendo	Invite three friends and you've got a bona fide <i>Zelda</i> party. Drink Red Medicine till you puke and skinny dip in Lake Hylia!	9
Lufia: Ruins of Lore	Atlus	Perennially overshadowed by Square's offerings, the <i>Lufia</i> series is just as engaging as <i>Final Fantasy</i> . It's also more challenging.	8
Lunar Legend	Ubi Soft	The anime cut-scenes and superb voice acting may be gone, but the great <i>Lunar</i> gameplay and story remain intact.	8
Mario Kart: Super Circuit	Nintendo	A balanced blend of <i>Super Mario Kart</i> and <i>Mario Kart 64</i> that even includes all the tracks from the former.	8
Mega Man Zero	Capcom	A difficult yet engaging installment of the <i>X</i> side story played as Zero, who is equipped with an arm cannon and beam saber.	8
Metroid Fusion	Nintendo	The follow-up to <i>Super Metroid</i> is eight years late, but the wait was well worth it. An adventure that ends way too quickly.	9
Phantasy Star Collection	Sega	Straightforward classic RPG action that's been overlooked for far too long. Includes <i>Phantasy Star 1, 2, and 3</i> .	9
Rayman Advance	Ubi Soft	<i>Rayman</i> is just as good in 2D as he is in 3D. It looks great and provides a decent challenge.	8
Super Mario Advance	Nintendo	Aside from the odd naming system, you can't really complain about a portable version of <i>Super Mario Bros. 2</i> .	8
Super Mario Advance 2: Super Mario World	Nintendo	There's really not much else that can be said except "portable <i>Super Mario World</i> " and "you should buy it."	9
Super Puzzle Fighter II	Capcom	Sometimes, you just get bored with <i>Tetris</i> . <i>Puzzle Fighter II</i> is a fantastic port of a fantastic and highly addictive game. Buy it now.	8
Tactics Ogre: The Knight of Lodis	Atlus	An incredibly deep strategy RPG with a branching story line and a rewarding battle system.	8
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3	Activision	It's amazing how they managed to cram <i>Tony Hawk</i> into a cartridge while keeping the essence of the game true to the console version.	8
Yoshi's Island: Super Mario Advance 3	Nintendo	Yoshi is the star of this show, one of the greatest 2D platformers ever put to silicon. There are even a couple of new bonus levels.	9



HE'S OLD! HE'S PISSED!

GAME GEEZER

SOCIAL SECURITY ONLY LASTS SO LONG.
THE OLD MAN NEEDS MORE DIVERSITY.

➔ "Uh, excuse us, Mr. Geezer—can we come in?"

Oh yeah, sure. Barge right in. That's why I closed the door? So you punks could open it and bother me. Way to take a hint.

"Cool, thanks. What are you doing in here, anyway? It looks like you're killing snakes or something. Is that *EverQuest*?"

No, it's not *EverQuest*, fools. Does it look like *EverQuest*? Wait, don't answer that. Of course it looks like *EverQuest*. Because it's one of these online massively multiplayer games everybody keeps yammering about, and they all look and play alike because nobody has a single goddamn drop of originality in this business anymore, except maybe for Miyamoto and whoever made that coloring game for PS2, which Mrs. Geezer and I get a kick out of playing together in the nude. Wanna see some pictures?"

"Uhh, maybe we should go now—"

Siddown! Now that you got me talking, you can stay here, pay attention, and learn something for a change. You want to know what's wrong with the game industry? No? Cowardice. That's what's wrong. Everybody is just too afraid to

try anything new anymore, because we live in a world of sissies and sheep. Someone comes along and makes a good game like *EverQuest*, and then everybody and their one-eyed grandma has to come along and make the same damn game over and over again until we're all sick of it.


You see this game on my screen here? This is *Shadowbane*. But it doesn't really matter. Might as well be *Earth and Beyond*. Or *Anarchy Online*. Or *Asheron's Call 2*. Or *Dark Age of Overweight Basement-Dwelling Mama's Boys Pretending to Be Big-Breasted Female Elves Because That's The Closest They'll Ever Get to Sex*. Whatever. The point is, it's all the same game now.

Yeah, sure, *Shadowbane* is different. Talk to the hand, wisenheimer. All I know is that I've been playing this game for hours, and here I am, still hitting snakes with a stick. Guess what? I did that in *EQ* four years ago. If you have something new to offer me, then get to it.

Let me tell you something right here and now: If I fork over my hard-earned cash for *Star Wars Galaxies* and end up just hitting some kinda space snake for 20 hours, rather

than, say, slicing some Dark Sith Lord in half with my lightsaber, I am gonna hobble out to Marin, and personally kick George Lucas' hairy ass.

You think I'm kidding? Try me. If I'm paying something like \$10 a month for the privilege of living in "your world," then you better make dang sure your world is slightly more original than all these other worlds I keep paying money to play in.

Remember what happened to all those annoying, fancy-pants yuppie idiots who smugly thought they were taking over the planet with that phony dotcom nonsense? Yeah, that's right. They're all slinging burgers at Wendy's now. You hear me? Put the snakes and the spiders and the rats and level treadmills away forever, and give us something new in our online games—or you're next. 



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